



An air tanker drops retardant on a wildfire burning near Lakeport, Calif., on Monday, July 30, 2018.



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Trump, Conte express alignment on immigration at White House

By KEN THOMAS

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two political outsiders, President Donald Trump and Italy's new premier expressed solidarity on migration issues Monday as they showed signs of a fledgling alliance at a time when the U.S. has dealt with strained relations with European leaders.

Trump greeted Italy's Giuseppe Conte as "my new friend" and said they bonded at the recent G7 meetings in Canada, crediting the prime minister for taking a "firm stance on the border." The president said the U.S. and Italy would pursue a new strategic dialogue on security issues, terrorism and immigration.

"We are both outsiders to politics. Can you believe it?" Trump said during a joint news conference with Conte. Trump said both were "determined to protect the rights and needs and interests and dreams of our citizens and we will do that."

Italy under Conte's new government has pushed for the European Union to accept tens of thousands



President Donald Trump waves after a news conference with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte in the East Room of the White House, Monday, July 30, 2018, in Washington.

Associated Press

of migrants coming across the Mediterranean Sea every year. The meeting follows a recent standoff over a private aid boat carrying more than 200 people who were rescued at sea. Italy, Malta and France all refused to let the vessel disembark.

Trump welcomed the prime minister to the White House for the first time since Conte came to power in June, bringing together two outsider leaders who have emerged from populist waves within their countries.

Conte leads the euroskep-

tic coalition of the 5-Star Movement, which considers itself anti-establishment, and the right-wing, north-based League party.

Trump last week avoided escalating a trade dispute with the European Union and his administration is expected to begin nego-

tiations quickly on avoiding tariffs on automobiles and removing trade barriers. But it followed tensions between the U.S. and EU over trade and the transatlantic alliance.

During their talks, Trump noted the U.S. trade deficit with Italy, a member of the EU, and said he was certain "we'll straighten that out pretty quickly."

Conte, in his remarks, said both he and Trump were leading "governments that represent change, they were chosen by citizens to change the status quo." He cited Italy's "innovative approach" on immigration and expressed support for Trump's recent talks with Russia Vladimir Putin.

Prior to the meeting, the White House referred to Italy as an important NATO ally and a key partner to U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq. Trump thanked Italy for its contributions on the fight against the Islamic State and NATO efforts in Afghanistan and later pointed to his push for NATO allies to spend more on defense. □



Attorney General Jeff Sessions, left, and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, put their hands over their heart as they sing the National Anthem during a Religious Liberty Summit at the Department of Justice, Monday, July 30, 2018.

Associated Press

By ERIC TUCKER

WASHINGTON (AP) — American culture has become "less hospitable to people of faith," Attorney General Jeff Sessions said Monday in vowing that the Justice Department would protect people's religious freedom and convictions. Sessions spoke at a Justice Department summit on religious tolerance at a time when courts have been

asked how to balance anti-discrimination laws against the First Amendment's religious freedom guarantees. He also announced the creation of a "religious liberty task force" to implement Justice Department guidance on respecting and accommodating religious beliefs, including those of department employees. Conservative groups immediately praised Sessions for

Sessions: U.S. culture 'less hospitable to people of faith'

promising to protect deeply held religious convictions, though critics of the Trump administration have repeatedly voiced concerns that the attorney general's stance undercuts LGBT rights and favors the rights of Christians over those of other faiths.

Sessions, the country's chief law enforcement officer, warned Monday of a "dangerous movement" that he said was eroding protections for religious Americans.

He asserted that "nuns were being forced to buy contraceptives" — an apparent, though not fully accurate, reference to an Obama administration health care policy meant to ensure women covered by faith-based groups' health plans have access to cost-free

contraceptives. Religious groups that challenged the policy argued it violated their beliefs.

The Supreme Court opted in 2016 to not resolve that dispute, asking lower courts to take another look in search of a compromise. Sessions also objected to members of Congress asking judicial and executive branch nominees about their religious dogma. And he praised a Colorado baker who refused to make a cake for a same-sex couple in a case that reached the Supreme Court and ended in his favor this year. That baker, Jack Phillips, was part of a panel discussion at the Justice Department summit.

"Let's be frank: A dangerous movement, undetected by many but real, is now chal-

lenging and eroding our great tradition of religious freedom. There can be no doubt. It's no little matter. It must be confronted intellectually and politically and defeated," Sessions said. "This election, this past election, and much that has flowed from it, gives us a rare opportunity to arrest these trends and to confront them."

"Such a reversal will not just be done with electoral victories, however, but by intellectual victories," he added.

Sessions, a Methodist and former Republican senator from Alabama, has made protecting religious liberty a cornerstone agenda item of his Justice Department — along with defending freedom of speech on college campuses. □



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Wildfires barrel toward Northern California lake towns

By MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ
and SUDHIN THANAWALA
LAKEPORT, Calif. (AP) —

A pair of wildfires that prompted evacuation orders for nearly 20,000 people barreled Monday toward small lake towns in Northern California, and authorities faced questions about how quickly they warned residents about the largest and deadliest blaze burning in the state.

Ed Bledsoe told CBS News he did not receive any warning to evacuate his home in the city of Redding before the flames came through last week and killed his wife, Melody, and his great-grandchildren, 5-year-old James Roberts and 4-year-old Emily Roberts.

"If I'd have any kind of warning, I'd have never, ever left my family in that house," Bledsoe said.

Shasta County Sheriff Tom Bosenko told the network there's an investigation into whether the Bledsoe home received a warning call or a knock on the door. The sheriff cited evidence that door-to-door notifications were made in the area. Bosenko did not return a message from The Associated Press on Monday.

The dispute came as authorities on Sunday ordered evacuations around twin fires in Mendocino and Lake counties, including from the 4,700-resident town of Lakeport, a popular destination for bass anglers and boaters on the shores of Clear Lake, about 120 miles (195 kilometers) north of San Francisco. The blazes have destroyed six homes and threaten 10,000 others. So far, the flames have blackened 87 square miles (225 square kilometers), with minimal containment.

Those fires were among 17 burning across the state, where fire crews were stretched to the limit.

"We have experienced fires the last four years, and so we're very aware of what can happen with fires and the damage they can cause," Lake County Sheriff Lt. Corey Paulich said.

Derick Hughes II did not heed the order and remained behind at his property in Nice, California, where he ran sprinklers on his roof and removed yard plants that could catch fire. The 32-year-old Marine Corps veteran sent his wife and two daughters to safety along with three carloads of belongings. But he said he had too much at stake to leave himself. He bought his three-bedroom house last year using a loan from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"This is everything I bled for, and I've worked really hard to get to where I am, and I'm just not willing to give it up so easily," he said over the phone. "Some people may think that's selfish of me, and I have insurance. But the way things go, I'd rather not start over."

Hughes said about five of his neighbors also disobeyed the evacuation text alert they got Sunday evening to protect their homes and keep looters out.

Farther north, police said five people were arrested on suspicion of entering areas evacuated due to the explosive wildfire around Redding.

That blaze killed six people and destroyed 723 homes. Authorities were also investigating at least 18 reports of missing people, though many of them may simply have failed to check in with friends or family, po-



A firefighter with Cal Fire Mendocino Unit walks along a containment line as a wildfire advances Monday, July 30, 2018, in Lakeport, Calif.

Associated Press

lice said. Fire officials were hopeful that they could make progress containing the blaze. The fire that threatened Redding — a city of about 92,000 — was ignited by a vehicle problem a week ago about 10 miles (16 kilometers) west of the city. On Thursday, it swept through the historic Gold Rush town of Shasta and nearby Keswick, fueled by gusty winds and dry vegetation. It then jumped the Sacramento River and took out subdivisions on the western edge of Redding. "It wasn't expected to travel that far that fast," California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection spokesman Scott Mclean said Monday. The fire slowed down as winds subsided, and crews were able to get into neighborhoods to prevent embers from taking out additional homes, he said. Bledsoe said he did not

know his home was in danger when he left his wife and great grandchildren to run an errand on Thursday. He said he received a phone call from his wife 15 minutes after he left saying he needed to get home because the fire was approaching. He said one of the children told him the blaze was at the back door. When he tried to return, the road was blocked and flames prevented him from returning on foot.

The sheriff has said the fire was moving fast, but authorities still alerted residents in a variety of ways, including going door-to-door and using loudspeakers on emergency vehicles. Authorities also use electronic warning systems, including an emergency alert system that is repeated by local news media and an automated calling system that can be tar-

geted to phones within a geographic area. Another method known as the Integrated Public Alert & Warning System can be directed to any cellphone within reach of a particular transmission tower, said Sherry Bartolo, operations manager for the Shasta County dispatch center.

The drawback of the automated calling system is that it is designed to dial landlines, but cellphone users must register their phones if they are to receive alerts, she said.

The dispatch center put out more than 18 emergency alerts between Thursday evening and midday Friday, Bartolo said.

The center usually has eight dispatchers on duty, but overnight Thursday had at least 12, along with four supervisors and three managers who worked through the night, she said. □

Democrat Manchin undecided on Kavanaugh after 2-hour meeting

By KEVIN FREKING

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The first Democratic senator to sit down with Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh said Monday he's not ready to say how he'll vote, but Kavanaugh did pick up the backing of Kentucky's Rand Paul, the only Republican in the narrowly divided Senate to have outwardly wavered in possible support.

Paul said he will back Kavanaugh despite misgivings about the judge's views on surveillance and privacy issues. Few had expected Paul would oppose President Donald Trump's choice in the end.

The endorsement gave Kavanaugh a boost as he sat down for two hours with Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, one of a handful of Democratic senators seen as potential swing votes in the confirmation fight.

Manchin said afterward that would not make a final decision on Judge Kavanaugh's nomination until "I complete a thorough and fair examination of his candidacy."

Manchin said they talked



Supreme Court nominee Judge Brett Kavanaugh, President Donald Trump's choice to replace retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy, arrives for a private meeting with Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., a member of the Judiciary Committee, on Capitol Hill in Washington, Monday, July 30, 2018.

Associated Press

about health care, but did not elaborate on specific questions and responses. Manchin has stressed that he wants the courts to protect the Affordable Care Act's protections for people with pre-existing health conditions.

"The Supreme Court may ultimately decide the fate of pre-existing conditions protections for nearly 800,000 West Virginians and will personally impact everyone who knows somebody with a pre-existing condition,"

Manchin said.

Brianne Solomon, a teacher from Ashton, West Virginia, was one of a handful of constituents who met with Manchin shortly after the Kavanaugh visit. She said an aide told the group that Manchin spent most of the meeting stressing to the nominee the importance of health insurance coverage for West Virginians with pre-existing conditions.

Solomon is working with the coalition Protect Our Care, which is defending

the health care law put into place under President Barack Obama. Solomon said she suffers from three pre-existing conditions, including asthma, which is an illness her son has as well.

"He doesn't deserve to be denied access to health care because I passed something onto him genetically," Solomon said.

Manchin was one of three Democrats who voted to confirm Trump's first Supreme Court nominee, Neil Gorsuch. Sens. Joe Donnelly of Indiana and Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota were the others. All three are up for re-election in states Trump easily won in 2016.

Republicans have a narrow 51-49 majority in the Senate. With the absence of Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., who is fighting brain cancer, they cannot afford to lose a single Republican vote if all Democrats vote "no."

Sens. Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska are the only two Republicans viewed as possible no votes on Kavanaugh's confirmation. Both say they haven't made a decision

yet. Both senators support abortion rights, and liberal advocacy groups are arguing that Kavanaugh's confirmation would undermine Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision.

Paul had let Trump know he preferred other potential Supreme Court nominees he viewed as more conservative. He had expressed concern over Kavanaugh's record on warrantless bulk collection of data and how that might apply to important privacy cases.

Paul, who met with the nominee last week, said he hoped Kavanaugh "will be more open to a Fourth Amendment that protects digital records and property."

Yet he also said his vote doesn't hinge on any one issue. "I believe he will carefully adhere to the Constitution and will take his job to protect individual liberty seriously," Paul said.

Trump thanked Paul with a tweet "for your YES on a future great Justice of the Supreme Court."

Republicans hope to confirm Trump's nominee by fall. □



In this Nov. 17, 1997 file photo Democratic Rep. Ron Dellums raises his fist while announcing his retirement from Congress at a news conference in Oakland, Calif.

Associated Press

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)

— Ron Dellums, a fiery anti-war activist who championed social justice as Northern California's first black congressman, died Monday from cancer, according to a longtime adviser. He was 82.

Dellums died at his home in Washington.

A former Marine who got his start in politics on the City Council of the liberal enclave of Berkeley, he defeated a labor-backed Democrat to win his first election to Congress in 1970. He retired in 1998 and was later elected mayor of

California's fiery former congressman Ron Dellums dies

his native Oakland in 2006.

"He was absolutely committed to what was right and what was just and believed that you had to do whatever you could to fight for that," said Dan Lindheim, who learned of Dellums' death from his wife, Cynthia Dellums.

A self-identified Democratic socialist, Dellums was at the center of most major liberal movements of the 1970s and 1980s. He led the drive to sanction South Africa during apartheid, challenged U.S. entry into wars, opposed increased military spending and helped start the Congressional Black Caucus.

During Dellums' first campaign for Congress in 1970, then-Vice President Spiro Agnew branded him an

"out-and-out radical."

Later in his victory speech, Dellums wryly referred to Agnew, a Republican, as his public relations agent, according to the U.S. House of Representatives' archives.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, a friend of Dellums, said U.S. sanctions and divestment from South Africa during apartheid would not have happened without Dellums, who pushed legislation for nearly 15 years to place economic restrictions on that nation.

Legislation didn't pass until 1986, and Congress had to override a veto from then-President Ronald Reagan.

"It was his voice that brought the sanctions on South Africa," Jackson said of Dellums.

He opposed almost every U.S. entry into military conflict during his tenure in Congress and, as head of the Congressional Black Caucus, began submitting his own version of a scaled-back military budget. He rose through the ranks of the House Armed Services Committee to become its first black chairman in 1993. Lindheim remembered Dellums as a gifted orator with a photographic memory who could speak without notes and never needed a word of his remarks to be corrected in the Congressional Record.

Sometimes, Lindheim said, Dellums would take speech notes onto the House floor just so he didn't intimidate his colleagues by speaking without them. □



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No charges against Minneapolis officers in black man's death

By YOUSSEF RDDAD and
AMY FORLITI

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Two Minneapolis police officers who shot and killed a black man last month were justified in using deadly force, a prosecutor announced Monday, saying the man was fleeing police and turned toward them with a loaded gun before he was shot.

Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman said Thurman Blevins had refused commands to stop and show his hands, and was clearly a danger to the officers and community. "Their decision to use deadly force against Mr. Blevins under those circumstances was authorized," Freeman said, adding that the officers will not be criminally charged.

His statements were in prepared remarks that were handed out to the media. Freeman had tried to make the announcement during a news conference, but he was shouted down by Blevins' friends and family members. They argue Blevins was no threat to anybody and was just sitting with a woman and his child.

"He was forced to run away from his family so they wouldn't shoot him down in his own community in front of his kid," said Sydnee Brown, a cousin.

Freeman's decision came after the city released the officers' body-camera video late Sunday. Freeman's report says Officers Justin Schmidt and Ryan Kelly were responding to a 911 call of a man firing a

gun into the air June 23 on the city's north side. Body camera videos show them pulling their cruiser up and Blevins seated on a curb near a woman with a child in a stroller. As the officers pull up, one says, "He's got a gun!" and they jump from the squad car.

Schmidt yells "Put your (expletive) hands up now!" as Blevins runs. Schmidt also yells, "Put your hands up! I will (expletive) shoot you!" Kelly yells, "Stop or I'll shoot!" repeatedly.

In a chase that takes less than a minute, Blevins yells back, "I didn't do nothing bro," "Please don't shoot" and "Leave me alone." An enhanced version of the videos has a red circle drawn around what appears to be a gun in Blevins' right hand, as he looks over his left shoulder at the officers.

After the chase turns down an alley, Blevins is shot, still running.

At Freeman's aborted news conference, Jeniffer Rohr, a friend of the Blevins family, criticized the officer who said "He's got a gun."

"He just gave himself a license to shoot Mr. Blevins," Rohr said. She said Blevins was "assassinated." Others were upset that Blevins was shot while running away.

In interviews with investigators, Schmidt said he feared for his life when he saw Blevins take his gun out of his pocket. Kelly said he believed the gun was aimed directly at him, and he was "pretty sure" Blevins fired the weapon at him.

The report from Freeman's office says a shell casing



Hennepin County attorney Mike Freeman appear at a news conference about body camera footage that was released Sunday in the Thurman Blevins case, at Hennepin County Government Center, Monday July 30, 2018, in Minneapolis.

Associated Press

from Blevins' gun was found near his body. In a conference call with reporters, Freeman said authorities can't be certain that Blevins shot at the officers, but it is irrelevant to the charging decision. He said merely pointing a handgun at officers is a threat that allows the officers to protect themselves.

"For our evaluation, the mere fact that he pointed a loaded handgun that he had fired earlier in the day ... gives officers justification to fire his weapon," Freeman said.

Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo said in a statement Monday that he accepts and respects the prosecutor's decision but cannot further comment until the criminal and internal investigations are complete. The statement said Arradondo will "continue to remain engaged,

active and listen throughout the community."

Both officers remain on paid leave, Minneapolis police spokesman John Elder said. An internal investigation has begun, and it will be up to the chief to decide when and if the officers return to the street, Elder said.

Freeman said toxicology reports on Blevins showed his blood-alcohol content was 0.162, double the legal limit for driving. Blevins also had THC, a component of marijuana, and other drugs in his system. Freeman said that was also irrelevant to his decision.

Freeman said the officers fired 14 shots and Blevins was hit four times.

Lt. Bob Kroll, the head of the police union, said the body camera footage proved the two officers acted justifiably.

"The officers deserve the

Minneapolis Police Department's highest award — the Medal of Honor — and the respect of the population it swore to protect," Kroll said. A protest of Blevins' death was planned for Tuesday afternoon at the Hennepin County Government Center.

Some witnesses had disputed Blevins was armed, saying he was carrying a bottle or a cup. The videos showed a bottle in Blevins' hand.

Blevins' death prompted earlier demonstrations and community advocates demanded transparency and urged the swift release of body camera footage. Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said Blevins' family viewed the video about an hour before it was released publicly. He called Blevins' death "tragic," but declined to comment on what the footage showed. □



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States suing Trump administration, company over 3D guns

By **MICHAEL RUBINKAM**
Associated Press

Eight states are filing suit against the Trump administration over its decision to allow a Texas company to publish downloadable blueprints for a 3D-printed gun, contending the hard-to-trace plastic weapons are a boon to terrorists and criminals and threaten public safety.

The suit, to be filed Monday in Seattle, asks a judge to block the federal government's late-June settlement with Defense Distributed, which allowed the company to make the plans available online. Officials say that 1,000 people have already downloaded blueprints for AR-15 rifles.

"I have a question for the Trump Administration: Why are you allowing dangerous criminals easy access to weapons?" Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson, a Democrat, said in a statement Monday. "These downloadable guns are unregistered and very difficult to detect, even with metal detectors, and will be available to anyone regardless of age, mental health or criminal history." Joining the suit were Demo-



This May 10, 2013, file photo shows a plastic pistol that was completely made on a 3D-printer at a home in Austin, Texas.

Associated Press

cratic attorneys general in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Maryland, New York and the District of Columbia. Separately, attorneys general in 21 states urged Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Attorney General Jeff Sessions on Monday to withdraw from the settlement with Defense Distributed, saying it "creates an imminent risk to public safety."

People can use the blueprints to manufacture a plastic gun using a 3D printer. But gun industry experts have expressed doubt that criminals would go to the trouble, since the printers needed to make the guns are very expensive, the guns themselves tend to disintegrate quickly and traditional firearms are easy to come by.

Cody Wilson, the founder of Defense Distributed, first

published downloadable designs for a 3D-printed firearm in 2013. It was downloaded about 100,000 times until the State Department ordered him to cease, contending it violated federal export laws since some of the blueprints were downloaded by people outside the United States.

The State Department reversed course in late June, agreeing to allow Wilson to resume posting the blue-

prints. The files were published on Friday.

The company filed its own suit in Texas on Sunday, asserting that it's the victim of an "ideologically-fueled program of intimidation and harassment" that violates the company's First Amendment rights.

The company's attorney, Josh Blackman, called it an "easy case."

States are free to enact gun control measures, but "what they can't do is censor the speech of another citizen in another state, and they can't regulate the commerce of another citizen in another state when that commerce is authorized by a federal government license," Blackman said in an interview Monday. "It's a violation of the First Amendment, it's unconscionable and we're going to fight it to the very end." Defense Distributed agreed to temporarily block Pennsylvania residents from downloading the plans after state officials went to federal court in Philadelphia on Sunday seeking an emergency order. The company said it has also blocked access to users in New Jersey and Los Angeles. □

Judge says U.S. must seek consent to medicate immigrant kids

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A federal judge ruled Monday that the U.S. government must seek consent before administering psychotropic drugs to immigrant children held at a Texas facility. U.S. District Judge Dolly M. Gee in Los Angeles issued

a ruling that the federal government violated portions of a longstanding settlement governing the treatment of immigrant children caught crossing the border.

Gee said the government must obtain consent or a

court order to give children psychotropic medications at a Texas facility under state law unless it's an emergency.

She also said officials must tell children in writing why they are in a secure facility and that gang affiliation

alone doesn't justify such a placement. "The kids weren't getting notice of why they were sent away," said Holly Cooper, co-director of the Immigration Law Clinic at University of California, Davis, and one of the lawyers representing

detained immigrant children. "We view this as a victory."

The decision comes as the Trump administration has toughened policies toward immigrant children and families caught crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. □



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ASHORE TO ASSIST ON HOLIDAY

Lawsuit filed in fatal duck boat sinking seeks \$100M

By MARGARET STAFFORD
KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The owners and operators of a tourist boat that sank this month in Missouri, killing 17 people, put profits over people's safety when they decided to put the Ride the Ducks boat on a lake despite design problems and warnings of severe weather, a lawsuit alleges. The lawsuit filed Sunday in U.S. District Court in Kansas City seeks \$100 million in damages on behalf of two of nine members of an Indiana family who died when the tourist boat sank July 19 at Table Rock Lake near Branson. A second lawsuit was filed Monday in state court on behalf of three daughters of William and Michelle Bright, of Higginsville, Missouri, who died in the accident. The wrongful-death lawsuit seeks more than \$125,000 in damages. "This tragedy was the predictable and predicted result of decades of unacceptable, greed-driven, and willful ignorance of safety by the Duck Boat industry in the face of specific and repeated warnings that their Duck Boats are death traps for passengers and pose grave danger to the public on water and on land," the federal lawsuit, filed on behalf of the estates of 76-year-old Ervin Coleman and 2-year-old Maxwell Ly, states. Robert Mongeluzzi, whose law firm won a \$17 million settlement when two Hungarian students drowned on a duck boat in Philadelphia in 2010, said at a news conference Monday that the Coleman family wants to know what happened when the boat sank. "And more importantly they want to make sure that no

one ever dies again inside a death trap duck boat," Mongeluzzi said. "They've asked that this lawsuit leads the charge to ban duck boats so they no longer kill their passengers and the children who ride them." Ripley Entertainment Inc., Ride the Ducks International, Ride the Ducks of Branson, the Herschend Family Entertainment Corp., and Amphibious Vehicle Manufacturing are named in the federal suit. The state-court suit names Riley Entertainment and Ride the Ducks International, as well as boat operators Kenneth McKee and Robert Williams. A Ripley spokeswoman said in a statement Monday that the company remains "deeply saddened" by the accident. She said the company would not comment further because a National Transportation Safety Board investigation is still underway and no conclusions have been reached. The federal lawsuit says the boat operators violated the company's policies by continuing with the ride despite the weather warnings and by not telling passengers to put on life jackets when the water got rough. He instead lowered plastic side curtains, "thus further entrapping passengers in the soon-to-sink vessel." The lawsuit cites an August 2017 report from private inspector Steve Paul, who warned Ripley Entertainment that the vessels' engines — and pumps that remove water from their hulls — were susceptible to failing in bad weather. It also accuses the defendants of ignoring warnings the NTSB issued in 2000 that

the vehicles, which are designed to operate on land and water, should be upgraded to ensure they remain upright and floating in bad weather. The 2000 recommendation from the NTSB was issued after a duck boat sank May 1, 1999, in Arkansas, killing 13 people. The federal suit says 42 deaths have been associated with duck boats since 1999. When Robert McDowell, then-president of Ride the Ducks Branson who designed the boats, responded that upgrades would require significant costs, NTSB Chairman Jim Hall said the recommendations were made because "immedi-



In this July 20, 2018, file photo, a duck boat sits idle in the parking lot of Ride the Ducks, an amphibious tour operator in Branson, Mo.

Associated Press

ate action was necessary to avoid additional loss of life." The lawsuit says the defendants ignored the warnings. The National Weather Service issued a severe thunderstorm warning for the area including Table Rock

Lake about 30 minutes before the doomed tour began. The NTSB said Friday that a preliminary review of video and audio recordings from the boat showed that the lake changed from calm to dangerous in minutes. □

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Greece: Divers recover body offshore of where wildfire raged

By ELENA BECATOROS

DEREK GATOPOULOS

Associated Press

RAFINA, Greece (AP) —

Coast guard divers recovered a body Monday near an area of Greece ravaged by a deadly wildfire a week ago the search for more victims focused on the coastline where hundreds of people were forced to flee.

The death toll from the blaze some 30 kilometers (18 miles) east of Athens rose to 92.

The coast guard has mobilized massive resources in its search for potential victims of the July 23 fire, the deadliest in Greece's recent history. Coast guard patrol vessels, helicopters and a navy frigate have scoured the southern Euboean Gulf since some people trying to escape fast-moving flames raced to the water.

They have been joined by coast guard special operations forces, which include divers able to reach depths of 120 meters and using underwater scooters to cover



Greece's Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, left, visits the burnt area of Mati, east of Athens, Monday, July 30, 2018.

Associated Press

greater distances.

A research vessel equipped with specialized sonar and a remotely operated underwater vehicle also was deployed, while dozens of civilian and retired naval divers have joined the search as volunteers.

Fanned by high winds, the

blaze gutted seaside resorts where many Athens residents and retirees have holiday homes. The high death toll has prompted criticism of the government over the absence of access roads, warning systems and other civil protection measures in residential

areas surrounded by forest and at high risk of wildfires. More than 500 people gathered outside Greece's parliament late Monday to attend a candlelight vigil for the victims of the wildfire.

Earlier, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras visited Mati, the

worst-affected area, tweeting that he spoke with "citizens, engineers, soldiers, firefighters and volunteers." His office released photos, and the prime minister took along a camera from state-run television. No other media was alerted.

A government spokesman said more than 3,500 homes had been damaged in the deadly blaze and a second fire near Athens, with more than 1,000 of the affected structures considered uninhabitable and slated for demolition.

"The fire burned through 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) in 90 minutes in an area where 20,000 people were present, so in those conditions it was not possible to have a fully organized evacuation effort," the spokesman, Dimitris Tzanakopoulos, said.

The government plans to reorganize its Civil Protection Authority with advice from experts from other European Union countries, Tzanakopoulos said without giving details. □

Moroccan king criticizes social programs after protests

By AMIRA EL MASAITI

RABAT, Morocco (AP) —

Moroccan King Mohammed VI has criticized the North African kingdom's social development programs as overlapping, uncoordinated and missing target populations, in a speech from a northern town that has been the epicenter for social unrest. The king's remarks on Sunday during the annual Throne Speech has special significance because he spoke in Al-Hoceima, where the Hirak Rif social movement was born and a month after 53 activists were given tough prison



In this photo dated Sunday, July 29, 2018, King Mohammed VI, is flanked by his brother Prince Moulay Rachid and Crown Prince Moulay Hassan, during the annual Throne Speech, in Al-Hoceima, Morocco.

Associated Press

sentences.

The monarch said that

ministries and public agencies spend time enforcing

welfare programs but they "overlap, lack proper coordination and don't target the populations that actually deserve help."

He did not mention Hirak but warned against "nihilists and other merchants of illusion" who use disfunctions "in order to strike at Morocco's security and stability." The speech marked the 19th anniversary of Mohammed's accession to the throne.

Al Hoceima is in the neglected northern Rif region, where the current king's father never set foot. In 1959 and 1984, Hassan II crushed uprisings in the Rif.

Son Mohammed, 54, has traveled there in the past. But holding his Throne Speech in Al Hoceima was a bold way to dissuade the population against the protest movement while telling public servants to fix the problems.

"I call on the government and all stakeholders con-

cerned to undertake an in-depth, thorough restructuring of national social welfare programs and policies," the king said in the nationally televised speech.

The Harak Rif movement has demanded that the king fulfill promises he made last year to build a school, a university and a hospital in the region. The seeds of the protest began in October 2016 when an impoverished fish seller in the region was crushed to death while trying to retrieve a valuable swordfish seized by police, who had tossed it into a garbage truck.

Hirak Rif leader Nasser Zefzafi, who launched the campaign for development and job creation, was convicted in June of threatening state security and sentenced to 20 years in prison, along with three activists. Fifty other activists received sentences ranging from one to 15 years for lesser charges. □

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| <p>OCEANIA BG 134</p>  <p>UNIQUE</p> <p>1 Bed - 1 Bath, Condominium Out side Jacuzzi, Fully Furnished Fully Equiped, Ground Floor Home: 78 m² / 840 Ft² Afl 710.000 \$ 399.000</p> | <p>PALM BEACH 320</p>  <p>4 Bed - 3 Bath, w/guest casita Hotel area, Fully Furnished land: 520 m² / 5,597 Ft² Home: 250 m² / 2,691 Ft² Afl 801.000 \$ 450.000</p> | <p>LAS CAMPEONAS 1</p>  <p>OPPORTUNITY</p> <p>3 Bed - 3 Bath, Swimming-pool Tierra del Sol, Garage, Furnished land: 627 m² / 6,749 Ft² Home: 180 m² / 1,937 Ft² Afl 979.000 \$ 550.000</p> | <p>OCEANIA AB 244</p>  <p>SOLD</p> <p>2 Bed - 2 Bath, Condominium Central Location, Fully Furnished Fully Equiped, Second Floor Home: 100 m² / 1080 Ft² Afl 1,041.000 \$ 585.000</p> | <p>OCEANIA P 211</p>  <p>OPPORTUNITY</p> <p>3 Bed - 2 1/2 Bath, Condominium Best deal, Fully Furnished Fully Equiped, Second Floor Home: 110 m² / 1184 Ft² Afl 1,157.000 \$ 650.000</p> |

Italy: Black athlete's injury among cases probed for racism

By FRANCES D'EMILIO

Associated Press

ROME (AP) — A black Italian athlete was wounded in the eye when an egg was hurled at her Monday, the latest of at least nine attacks since Italy's anti-migrant government took power that are being investigated as possible acts of racism.

Asylum-seekers, legal immigrants and others who aren't ethnic Italians are among the people injured since early June. They include a 13-month-old Roma girl who was shot while she was in her mother's arms on a Rome street and left partially paralyzed. The egg thrown Monday hit discus thrower Daisy Osakue, who was born in Italy to Nigerian immigrant parents. Osakue holds Italian citizenship and was expected to compete for Italy in the European Athletics Championships next week. Emerging from a clinic with a bandage over her left eye, Osakue said she thinks she was mistaken for one of the African prostitutes who often work the street on the outskirts of Turin she was crossing.

The athlete, who is also a sprinter and hurdler, said she saw a car speeding toward her while she was in a crosswalk and dashed to the sidewalk to avoid

the vehicle. She recalled feeling something strike her eye and falling forward.

"I'm sorry to say it, but I think we're dealing with racism," Osakue, who currently trains and studies criminal justice in the U.S. state of Texas, told Italian TV.

Her ability to compete in the track-and-field championships is uncertain because eggshell fragments injured her cornea. Police were investigating to determine if it was a racially motivated attack.

In the case of the Roma child, police concluded she was shot by an air gun that an Italian man fired from his balcony. The man denied targeting Roma people, saying the pistol misfired while he was trying to adjust it.

Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, leader of the anti-migrant League party that is a partner in the coalition government sworn in June 1, wished Osakue a speedy recovery Monday, but dismissed as "nonsense" concerns about a "racism emergency in Italy."

Salvini campaigned for the March 4 election with the slogan "Italians first" and accused migrants of robbing Italians of work. His party is soaring in Italian opinion polls.

Opposition leader Maurizio Martina, who heads the



Discus thrower Daisy Osakue talks with reporters outside a hospital in Turin, Italy, Monday, July, 30 2018.

Associated Press

center-left Democratic Party, called on Salvini and his allies to denounce the "racist spiral" of violence.

"They are accomplices" if they don't, Martina said. The incidents causing worry have occurred throughout Italy, from north to south.

A Cape Verde man with a residency permit was shot in the back on July 26 while working on scaffolding to set up decorative lighting

for a town celebration in Italy's northeast Veneto region, a stronghold for Salvini's party.

Police said the shot came from a pellet rifle fired from a private terrace. A man told investigators he was aiming at a pigeon.

Near Naples on July 20, two youths allegedly shot a 22-year-old cook from Mali who has lived in Italy for four years. A young man

from Senegal was kicked and punched last week by three Italians at a cafe where he worked in Sicily.

Citing the wounding of the Roma child, Italian President Sergio Mattarella declared in a recent speech that "Italy can't resemble the Wild West, where someone can buy a rifle and from a balcony shoot, striking a year-old baby, ruining her health and her future." Osakue, in an interview with the Italian news agency ANSA, referred to right-wing political rhetoric targeting foreigners.

"They have very strong power of influence on mass media," she said. "So if they say 'it's their (the migrants) fault, they steal our jobs, they come here and they destroy everything ... obviously people will start thinking that they are right,' she said.

Shortly before the March election, a right-wing Italian extremist who once ran for local office for Salvini's party allegedly shot and wounded six Africans in drive-by shootings in the town of Macerata.

The suspect has reportedly said he was angry over the slaying in Macerata of an 18-year-old woman whose body was hacked into pieces. A local Nigerian drug dealer was arrested in the murder. □

Counting starts after Zimbabweans vote in pivotal election

By CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA
FARAI MUTSAKA

Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP)

— With hope and pride, millions of Zimbabweans voted peacefully Monday in an election that many believe is their best chance to escape the toxic politics and dead-end economics of the era of Robert Mugabe, who wasn't on the ballot for the first time in the nation's nearly four-decade history.

But opposition activists used to the violence, intimidation and vote-tampering that marred elections under Mugabe called for vigilance against the same kind of skullduggery this time around. Western monitors noted some problems at polling stations, but said it wasn't yet clear whether they reflected a deliberate effort to manipulate the elections.

"They may be peaceful, but we don't know how credible they are," said 51-year-old Classified Chivese, a voter who, like many Zimbabweans, is unemployed. Zimbabwe's political climate has opened up since 94-year-old Mugabe, who once said he would rule for life, resigned in November after a military takeover and ruling party move to impeach him. Throngs celebrated the removal of Mugabe, in power since independence from white minority rule in 1980, but many Zimbabweans view Monday's election as an equally important milestone.

More than 5.5 million people were registered to vote in an election featuring a record more than 20 presidential candidates and nearly 130 political parties vying for parliamentary seats. If no presidential candidate wins more than 50 percent of the vote, a runoff will be held Sept. 8. The two main contenders were 75-year-old President Emmerson Mnangagwa, a former deputy president and longtime enforcer for Mugabe who has reinvented himself as a candidate for change; and 40-year-old Nelson Chamisa, a



Zimbabweans line up to vote at the Fitchela primary school in Kwekwe, Zimbabwe, Monday, July 30, 2018.

lawyer and pastor who became head of the main opposition party a few months ago after the death of its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai. After polls closed at 7 p.m. and vote-counting began, Mnangagwa appealed to Zimbabweans to be patient and wait for the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to announce results. The final, official tally is expected within five days.

"Today, Zimbabwe experienced a beautiful expression of freedom & democracy," Mnangagwa tweeted. "No matter which way we voted, we are all brothers and sisters."

Earlier, however, Chamisa said on Twitter that voting delays in urban areas, where his support is strong, were a "deliberate attempt" to undermine his election bid. The allegations by the head of the Movement for Democratic Change party intensified concerns about management of the election and the prospect of a dispute over its outcome. The head of the European Union mission monitoring Zimbabwe's elections said his team saw "huge differences" in the pace of voting at polling stations. Voters at one location waited less than an hour to cast their ballots while others at a nearby station waited more than half the day, El-

mar Brok said.

"In some cases, it works very smoothly," Brok said. "But in others, we see that it's totally disorganized and that people become angry, that people leave."

He noted a case of the ruling ZANU-PF party delivering 100 people by bus to vote in a district where they didn't live. Observers have to check whether it was a single example or part of a pattern "which might have influence on the result of the elections," Brok said.

The fact that Brok and other Western observers were even in Zimbabwe and free to operate wherever they liked reflected a new transparency after years of Mugabe banning outside monitors. Still, there were concerns about bias in state media, a lack of transparency in ballot printing and reports of intimidation by pro-government traditional leaders who are supposed to stay neutral. Among opposition objections was that the ballots listed presidential candidates in two columns of 14 and nine names, with Mnangagwa at the top of the second column — a spot that would presumably make it easier for people to vote for him. Observers say the law requires a single column of names in alphabetical order.

Also, millions of Zimbabweans living abroad, including in neighboring South Africa, were barred from voting unless they traveled home to do so. The government said it did not have the resources to organize voting for expatriates, many of whom are believed to support the opposition.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, accused of manipulating election wins for Mugabe in the past, has said this vote will be free and fair.

"We need peace and we need everyone to be comfortable, to go out and exercise their right to vote without fear," Priscilla Chigumba, a judge who chairs the commission, said during voting Monday.

Chigumba also said police have been informed about two presidential candidates who might have violated the law by campaigning after the cut-off time. She didn't name them, but they are likely to be Chamisa and Mnangagwa, both of whom issued public statements on Sunday.

Despite Mugabe's troubled legacy, dozens of cheering Zimbabweans gathered outside the polling station in the capital where he voted. Struggling to walk, Mugabe raised his fist to acknowledge them. He

made his way into the polling center, had his finger inked and was assisted by his wife into the booth.

On Sunday, Mugabe said Chamisa was the only viable candidate and rejected Mnangagwa and the ruling party, saying: "I cannot vote for those who have tormented me."

Mnangagwa hopes an election viewed as credible will bring international legitimacy and investment to Zimbabwe, though a seriously flawed process could signal more stagnation. The president is himself the target of U.S. sanctions imposed on some government leaders and companies over human rights concerns during the Mugabe era.

Despite expectations that the elections could bring a better life, Zimbabwe remains plagued by the hopelessness of unemployment, cash shortages and moribund industries. Many problems are due to mismanagement exacerbated by the country's old status as an international pariah.

"We need change because we have suffered a lot here," said 65-year-old Mable Mafaro, a voter in Harare.

Another voter was exultant, comparing the election to the end of white minority rule.

"I'm so happy," said 28-year-old Tapiwa Kahondo. "This is 1980 for Zimbabwe. We are so happy for today." □



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Hundreds stranded on Indonesian mountain after earthquake

By ROSYIDIN SEMBAHULUN
Associated Press

SEMBALUN, Indonesia (AP)

— Hundreds of tourists stranded on Mount Rinjani on the Indonesian island of Lombok by an earthquake that killed 16 people and triggered landslides are making their way off the mountain, shaken by their experience but mostly unharmed, an official said Monday.

By late afternoon, more than 250 people had reached a relief post in Sembalun village and a team of rescuers has reached hundreds more near the mountain's crater lake, a local military official, Arifianto, told Indonesian TV.

He said some suffered light injuries and were traumatized, but most were in good condition.

The magnitude 6.4 earthquake early Sunday killed 16 people, including an In-



Villagers clear debris caused by an earthquake at Sajang village, Sembalun, East Lombok, Indonesia, Monday, July 30, 2018.

doneasian student who was among the Mount Rinjani climbers. The shallow quake set off landslides on the mountain that's carpeted in boulders and rocks,

blocking usual paths out. The National Disaster Mitigation Agency had said more than 680 people were stranded on Rinjani, an active volcano, based

on figures from its entry gates where visitors are registered. Most are foreign — from 26 countries, including more than 330 from Thailand.

Associated Press

Arifianto, who uses one name, said rescuers will escort trekkers down the mountain. Indonesian's elite special forces have also been deployed to speed up the evacuation. The shallow quake damaged more than 1,400 houses and was felt on neighboring Bali island, where no damage or casualties were reported.

Indonesia's meteorology and geophysics agency has recorded more than 270 aftershocks.

Anci, a villager from near the quake epicenter, said he and his family spent the night in a makeshift tent, worried that aftershocks could cause more buildings to collapse.

"We slept here at the roadside because our house collapsed in the quake," he said. "There have been many aftershocks, although they are not strong so far. □"

China says still committed to Hong Kong semi-autonomy

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China's foreign minister said Monday that his country remains committed to the "one country, two systems" governing framework in Hong Kong, despite growing concerns that Beijing is eroding the former British colony's civil liberties.

Wang Yi told reporters following talks with his British counterpart, Jeremy Hunt, that China would continue to follow the system put in place when the city was turned over to Chinese rule in 1997.

"Hong Kong affairs are the domestic affairs of China. We do not welcome nor do



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, speaks during press conference with Britain's Foreign Minister Jeremy Hunt at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, Monday, July 30.

Associated Press

we accept other countries to interfere in China's domestic affairs," Wang said

at a joint news conference. "But of course China will continue to support and

will stay committed to one country, two systems," Wang said.

Beijing promised to let Hong Kong maintain wide autonomy and civil liberties for 50 years, but fears are growing that China's communist leaders are backtracking by oppressing the political opposition.

While the financial center remains among the highest-rated for rule of law and government efficiency, freedom of speech is seen as coming under attack. The government has also moved against a generation of young political activists who emerged after 2014's failed nonviolent

protests over Beijing's decision to restrict elections.

Chinese President Xi Jinping warned in a speech last year marking 20 years since Hong Kong became a semi-autonomous region of China that any activities in the city seen as threatening China's sovereignty and stability would be "absolutely impermissible."

Accompanying that hard line, China has angrily denounced critical reports about the implementation of one country, two systems from Britain, with which it signed a joint agreement on post-1997 arrangements, and other nations. □

In Panama City's booming colonial core, locals fight to stay

By JUAN ZAMORANO

Associated Press

PANAMA CITY (AP) — Esther Marina Sanchez has watched her neighborhood — the heart of Panama City — transformed by its designation as a UNESCO world heritage site. Tourists and well-heeled Panamanians now stroll the paving-stone streets among gaudy hotels, fancy restaurants and trendy discos that have popped up in once-dilapidated colonial-era buildings.

Gone are the gangs, the decay and abandoned structures — as well as Sanchez's home, and those of most of her neighbors. Sanchez recalled how her landowner offered the family money 2½ years ago, but said they didn't really have a choice: "Take it or leave it, but you're leaving."

A fast-moving real estate boom spurred by the 1997 declaration of the Casco Antiguo district as a world heritage site has irrevocably altered the character of the neighborhood. Locals initially welcomed the designation, hoping to reap the benefits of the revitalization that would come. But it ended up pricing them out, as long-absent landowners suddenly saw money to be made by converting properties to hotels or night spots or renting them to well-heeled tenants.

"Instead of being a benefit, it has brought us pain, powerlessness. It has diminished us as a family," said



In this June 5, 2018 photo, graffiti covers a wall near the beach in the Casco Viejo neighborhood in Panama City.

Sanchez, the 59-year-old leader of a residents' association. "The social fabric that was declared here has been torn apart."

According to census figures, the population of the Casco and neighboring San Felipe districts has dropped from about 16,000 in the early 1990s to a little over 2,000 today.

The seaside Casco and its defensive walls were founded in 1673 to replace the first Spanish settlement on the Pacific Coast after it was sacked by pirates. It housed — and houses — some of the country's central institutions: the official presidential residence, the Metropolitan Cathedral and the National Theater.

Over the years it fell into disrepair as newer neighbor-

hoods elsewhere in the city became more attractive. Wealthy residents moved out, and low-income families and gangs moved in, in many cases squatting in abandoned architectural treasures.

The UNESCO declaration suddenly reversed that trend.

The change is readily apparent. Scenes of elderly residents chatting in public squares, kids kicking around soccer balls and laundry flapping from balcony clotheslines have all but disappeared. They have been replaced by flip-flop-clad tourists snapping pictures of historic churches and dining in sidewalk cafes near a scattering of jacaranda flowers. At night, music echoes through the streets.

"It is more developed. You can tell that they have brought substantial labor to the restoration," said Roberto Perez, a tourist from Madrid. The last time he visited, in 2008, a group of youths mobbed him and made off with his camera. This time he enjoyed the Casco so much he extended his stay. "There was a good vibe, good music, good atmosphere," Perez said.

Sanchez and her relatives, along with 27 other families, ended up in an abandoned three-story school with no electricity, among the last holdouts of long-time residents. Sleeping in converted classrooms, they share bathrooms and hang laundry out on interior balconies just down the street from a luxury hotel that

used to be home to local gang leaders.

Nearby, they maintain a round-the-clock protest camp on an empty lot that authorities had hoped to auction off, demanding the government build them new housing on the spot. They posted a sign reading: "The country is being sold to the highest bidder."

Many locals who have been forced out over the years ended up in homes far away on the city's outskirts, but Sanchez and others swear they will not accept relocation outside the neighborhood they call home.

Authorities say displacement of families who decades ago took over the deteriorating buildings would have happened sooner or later, once landowners saw value in retaking those properties.

Ariana Lyra Young, director of the governmental Historic Heritage agency that approves restoration projects in the Casco, acknowledged that the boom has affected poor residents, but said the economic benefits have been tremendous. The Casco is now the country's No. 2 tourism draw after the nearby Panama Canal.

"You have to find a solution for them because they are people who have lived here 20, 30 years," Lyra said. "But on the other hand, you have to think about the economy of the country. These investments contribute and create work." □

Ex-Colombia leader mounts defense in witness tampering probe



Former Colombian President and Sen. Alvaro Uribe speaks during a press conference at his home in Rionegro, Colombia, Monday, July 30, 2018.

Associated Press

Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)

— Powerful former Colombian President Alvaro Uribe is mounting his defense against allegations of bribery and witness tampering. In an hour-long press conference outside his residence near Medellin on Monday, Uribe said yet-to-be-released audio recordings will vindicate him.

The Supreme Court is investigating Uribe for allegedly pressuring witnesses in a protracted legal dispute

with another Colombian senator, Ivan Cepeda.

Uribe accused Cepeda of offering money to witnesses who testified that the former leader had ties to a violent paramilitary group. The court found no evidence to support Uribe's accusation but did find grounds to investigate him for witness tampering instead.

Uribe's lawyer is requesting that three Supreme Court judges be recused from the case. He questioned their

impartiality and said there is evidence of irregularities like leaking information to journalists. □



LOCAL



ArubaCoin: A Social Experiment, Just Like Bitcoin

ORANJESTAD – New initiatives give energy, but you need to understand them to be willing to participate. Aruba Today had the pleasure to interview the people of ArubaCoin, out of curiosity about the new cryptocurrency.

What is ArubaCoin and how does it work?

"ArubaCoin is a decentralized social cryptocurrency, there is no central authority. It's an ERC-20 on the ethereum block chain. The benefit of that is, ArubaCoin can be sent and received on any ethereum wallet. Transaction fees are paid in ether and it is supported by popular hardware wallets Ledger and Trezor. You control your wealth by controlling the private key, which you can backup numerous ways and multiple times. It's an open source and fully auditable on the block chain. Anybody and everybody can contribute."

"It's also programmable money so there are all of use-cases, ArubaCoin could have numerous purposes:

- 1) means of cheap and instant exchange without any 3rd party involved
- 2) e-commerce and online platforms instant payments without the risk of charge-backs
- 3) a censorship resistant scarce digital asset
- 4) financial sovereignty
- 5) automated settlement layer

It's a new technology that many still don't understand nor need to. Many don't understand what TCP/IP is but you use it every day, it's called the internet. Eventually the user-experiences



will be seamless and you won't know you are using cryptocurrency in the backend of an application. Many are skeptical of Bitcoin or ArubaCoin which is very normal if you don't fully understand the fundamentals. Cryptocurrency was created out of necessity to solve a problem."

"ArubaCoin did 2 rounds of free Airdrops to the Aruban Community where hundreds of participants received free 200 ArubaCoin (at today's market price \$2.30 = \$460) and 50 ArubaCoin airdrops current total value of \$115. This is how we wanted to reach broad distribution for the local Aruban community. And in this way create a low barrier of entry for the rest of the community."

Who started ArubaCoin and with what purpose?

"ArubaCoin has the same mystique that Bitcoin has, nobody knows who the creators of the genesis block are, which eventually doesn't matter. It's a grassroots project, it's been released for the public. The community has grown substantially, from bitcoin advocates to Aruban cryptocurrency community members. The same as Satoshi Nakamoto left bitcoin to the community members, this happened to ArubaCoin also. The purpose is to solve a problem and have

an alternative. A social experiment just like bitcoin."

What is your goal with ArubaCoin?

"The goal of the ArubaCoin community in general is to have a wide adoption and active community and slowly but surely grow the eco-system. Sustainability is priority. An easy and instant means of exchange. Physically bringing cash is costly and timely, while local bank transfers takes 2 days."

How many and which companies work with ArubaCoin so far?

"Currently in Aruba there are 16 businesses accepting ArubaCoin:

Linda's Dutch Pancakes
Aruba E-Bike Tours
Casalina Garden Apartments
New Image Spa Aruba @ Barcelo Hotel
Alfie's Burger joint & Bar
Mi Desayuno Restaurant
Cunucu 297
Tennis School Aruba Palm Beach
ArubaCanoe water activities & paddle school
Motivami
Dog Hotel Aruba
Gomes Air-conditioning & services
InvenTech Aruba
Best Buy Family Store

It's listed on 2 exchanges: EtherDelta exchange

and ForkDelta exchange. And listed on CoinMarketWatch.com for market cap and price ticker, market indicators. GetDelta app also for price ticker."

Where can people find information?

"You can find more information at www.arubacoin.org and follow our Facebook community page or telegram group."

Do you have cooperation with other digital currency?

"The community members and developers are community members of bitcoin and other coins like zcoin and ethereum, so yes we have collaborations with broad spectrum of prominent developers and community members in the space."

What can you say about the comments that digital currency comes with high energy costs?

"High energy cost will depend on which algorithm/mining hardware your talking about (asic). The high energy cost is based on the countries where nobody mines because it would be unprofitable. The POW (proof of work) algorithm which bitcoin is working on miners are using green cheap energy where there is excess electricity, like Iceland and China. ArubaCo-

in is built on ethereum and does not use the sha-256 algorithm that bitcoin uses. And soon the protocol should be switching to PoS which is more energy efficient."

Why would people choose for digital currency? How would tourists benefit from this?

"Most adoption it's fueled by necessity, if it solves a problem there will be users and growth.

And we see many opportunities and use-cases that can be used with it, that otherwise could not be accomplished. We are focused on the local community and eco-system, tourist are not the priority. Of course you have Aruban community members that live abroad, those are already participating in ArubaCoin, they also have a unique use-case because they could send \$10 from Europe instantly and the received can pay their bill instantly, within minutes.

ArubaCoin is very new, we do not recommend anybody to take this as an investment advice.

Bitcoin, ArubaCoin or any cryptocurrency can be HIGHLY volatile, we do not recommend anybody buying cryptocurrency without doing due diligence how to use it. If you lose your private key or password or don't properly back it up, nobody can retrieve those coins." □

Aruba Ray's Comedy CELEBRATING ITS FIVE YEAR ANNIVERSARY!



PALM BEACH — The "Aruba Ray's Comedy" features some of the funniest American standup comedians in a terrific 90-minute show.

Celebrating five year's of Excellence in Aruba, Aruba Ray's Comedy is the number one rated Night Time Activity on TripAdvisor, the number one rated Show on TripAdvisor, and the number one rated Fun Activity on TripAdvisor.

And was named as one of USA Today's "10 Best!"

Advance tickets are suggested - - and are less expensive - - at www.ArubaComedy.com.

This is the same caliber show you would find at the top comedy clubs in NYC. The comedians are truly some of the best from the United States, and perform in a relaxed, intimate setting at the Marriott.

In addition, there is an option to purchase a four-hour premium open bar for only \$20.

This wonderful show is a great way to spend a night out.

Top American standup comics perform in Aruba Ray Ellin's phenomenal show at the Marriott Resort and Stellaris Casino!

APPEARING UNTIL AUGUST

10TH:

DAN NATURMAN FROM "AMERICA'S GOT TALENT," PETE LEE FROM "THE JIMMY FALLON SHOW," ERIN JACKSON FROM "LAST COMIC STANDING," BRIAN SCOTT MCFADDEN FROM CBS' "THE LATE SHOW" and RAY ELLIN FROM COMEDY CENTRAL

Ray Ellin hosts and produces the shows. Considered by his peers to be the best host in NYC, Ray is known as "Aruba Ray" because of his passion for Aruba. Ray has been coming to Aruba every month for the past six years, and produces and hosts these incredible com-

edy shows on the island. He is a popular comedian in New York, and has brought his talent and colleagues to Aruba.

Ray has appeared on many television programs; he has hosted the popular talk show Late Net, and hosted the television shows The Movie Loft, Brain Fuel, and New York Now. He also produced and directed the very successful film The Latin Legends of Comedy, distributed by 20th Century Fox.

Ray is executive producer and is co-starring in the new television show This Week at the Cellar, which will premiere on Comedy Central on October 26th.

The shows are at 830pm, every night, from July 8th to August 10th, in the Amsterdam Ballroom at the Marriott Resort, down the hall from the casino. Doors open at 8pm.

It is suggested to arrive early - seating is first come first serve. The showroom is intimate - - it is suggested you purchase tickets in advance at www.ArubaComedy.com. You can also purchase tickets (subject to availability!) at the Amsterdam Ballroom showroom door at 730pm. The tickets are \$36 online, and \$40 at the door.

Plus, audience members can purchase an OPTIONAL four hour premium open bar for only \$20!

The premium open bar continues after the show in the casino until midnight.

This is an incredible deal! Anyone can attend, however the show is suggested for a mature audience.

Ask your concierge for assistance, or call the Aruba Marriott Resort and Stellaris Casino at 520-6225, or call 749-4363.

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The Aruba Tourism Authority proudly presents Goodwill Ambassadors Certificate to Carl & Mary Hultman.



PALM BEACH — Recently, Ms. Darline S. de Cuba had the great pleasure to honor a Loyal and friendly visitors of Aruba as their home away from home.

The symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, Transportation, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between 10-20 and more

consecutive years.

The honorees were: Mr. Carl & Mrs. Mary Hultman honored as Goodwill Ambassadors for 25 years of consecutive visit to our is-

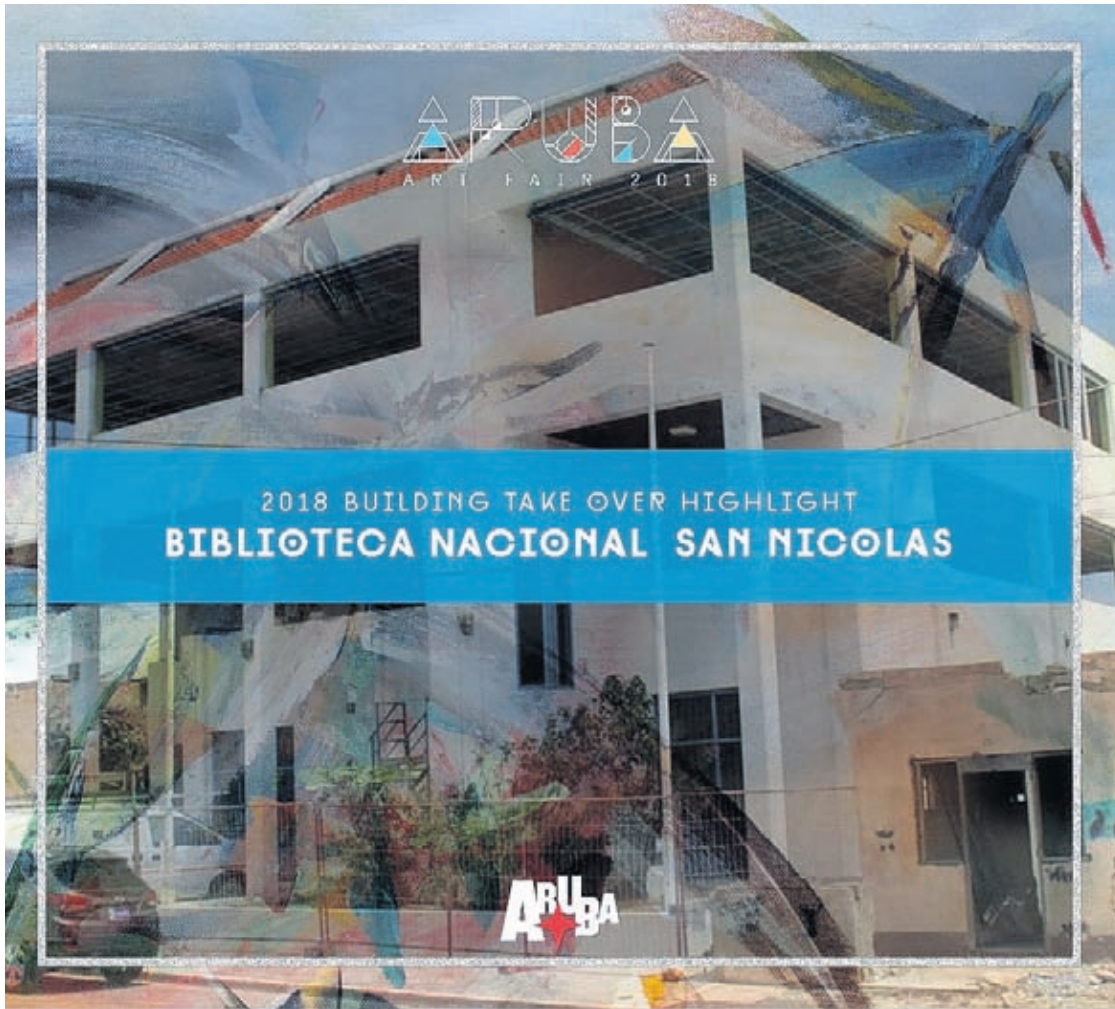
land.

Mr. Carl Hultman is President Board Member at La Cabana Beach Resort.

The certificate was presented to them by the rep-

resentative of Aruba Tourism Authority Ms. Darline S. de Cuba in the presence of members at La Cabana Beach Resort. □

ARUBA ART FAIR 2018



SAN NICOLAAS — This year Aruba Art Fair will be transforming the streets of San Nicolaas once again into a spectacular work of art. The National Library building in San Nicolaas will be turned into a masterpiece.

It is known that many travelers nowadays will seek a different experience when looking for a destiny to go to for amusement. Aruba, thanks to the big effort of

Aruba Tourism Authority Sui Generis and a dynamic team, are one step ahead anticipating the changes and taking action in order for Aruba to continue being an island that has more to offer than just the perfect beaches.

Art & Culture is something that more and more tourists are seeking.

San Nicolaas in just 2 years has become a key point for

the tourist that are seeking for something more during their stay. Since the first Art Fair back in 2016 more and more tourists are considering San Nicolaas in their outing. A Strategic planning including international artists is what they are working on. The world's best of the best are being searched for in order to generate more and more spectacular murals on the buildings in the streets of San Nicolaas. Not

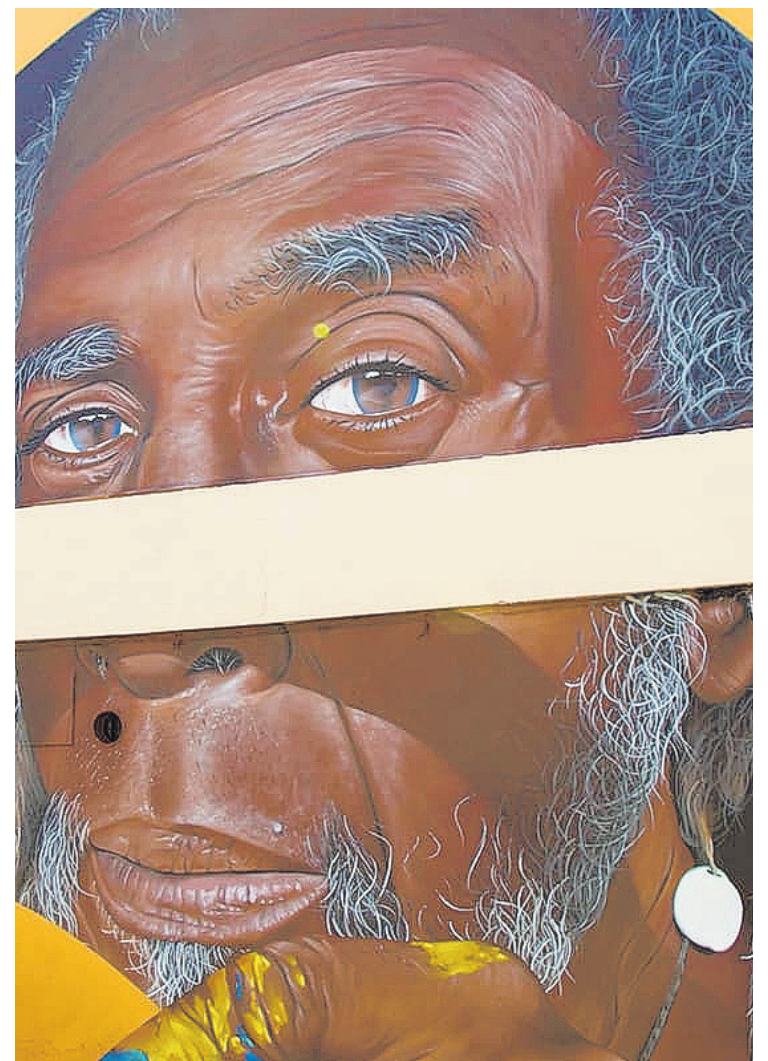
only the buildings but also the streets will get a complete new look to make it extraordinary.

Since the start of Aruba Art Fair in 2016, the building of the National library has been on top of their list to get a complete make-over. Since 2016 this building has been undergoing renovation and finally this year the renovation have been completed. The entire building has been painted white and awaits now 3 artists from Europe to transform it into a magnificent artwork. The 3 artists from Kazakhstan, Czech Republic and Portugal have already worked together. Dmitrij Proskin, ChemiS of Kazakhstan is well known in Aruba for his piece of art "House of Cards".

He is a writer and philanthropist who recently offered all his profits of his masterpiece Pink Crocodile to establish a hospice in Czech Republic. Mr. Dheo, self-educated, from an early age has been converting his work in spectacular pieces of arts acclaimed around the world. This young artist from Portu-

gal has majestic work of art in over 40 countries around the world. Pariz One, visual artist also from Portugal has become very popular internationally recently for his painting "What goes around" which received numerous awards and was sold for a gigantic sum at the Catawiki International Street Art/Urban Art Auction 2018. Pariz One is also well known all over Europe for his sports clothing line with colors and designs just as remarkable as his paintings.

Aruba Art Fair wants to invite the whole community of Aruba to send their wish of what they want to see on the murals of the National Library in San Nicolaas on their website www.arubaartfair.com or mail info@arubaartfair.com. Aruba Art Fair 2018 is possible thank to the numerous sponsors Aruba Tourism Authority Sui Generis, Prins Bernard Fonds Caribe, Unoca, Divi Resorts Aruba, Kooyman BV, AIS y VNO. Aruba Art Fair 2018 will take place in the streets of San Nicolaas October 5, 6 & 7, 2018. □



SPORTS



NFL concussion claims hit \$500M in less than 2 years

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — More than \$500 million in claims were approved as of Monday under the NFL's concussion settlement, nearly a decade earlier than league officials estimated they would reach that amount. Claims administrators in the settlement released an updated report on the concussion settlement information website saying about \$502 million had been approved in less than two years of the settlement. The original actuarial estimates from the NFL estimated a little more than \$400 million would be paid out in the first decade.

Attorneys for the retired players adjusted their estimates on the total payout of expected claims earlier this month, saying the settlement would likely reach \$1.4 billion— almost a half billion more than the NFL originally estimated. "We encourage all eligible former players to immediately sign up for a baseline assessment, and they can take comfort in knowing that compensation will be available for more than 60 years if they develop a qualifying condition," said Christopher Seeger, co-lead class counsel for the former NFL players. "The fact that \$500 million in claims have been approved in less than two years proves that this settlement is fulfilling its promise to former NFL players and their families."

Almost 2,000 claims have been filed in less than two years, according to the update filed Monday. □

NUKE EM'

Braves' Newcomb loses no-hitter with 2 outs in 9th

Atlanta Braves starting pitcher Sean Newcomb works in the fifth inning of a baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers, Sunday, July 29, 2018, in Atlanta.

Eovaldi sharp in Red Sox debut; Boston beats Twins 3-0

By The Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Nathan Eovaldi pitched seven impressive innings in his first start with Boston, J.D. Martinez drove in all three runs to increase his major league-leading RBI total to 89 and the Red Sox beat Minnesota for their 18th victory in 22 games.

Martinez had a double, single and walk, and Andrew Benintendi added two hits and a walk for the Red Sox. The AL East-leaders improved to a majors' best 74-33 by winning three of four in the weekend series.

Acquired in trade from Tampa Bay for a minor league pitcher on Wednesday, Eovaldi (4-4) gave up four hits, striking out five without issuing a walk. Matt Barnes pitched the eighth and Craig Kimbrel got the final three outs for his 33rd save.

Jose Berrios (10-8) was in trouble every inning, giving up three runs on nine hits with three walks and five strikeouts in 4 2/3 in his first career start in Fenway Park. **YANKEES 6, ROYALS 3**

NEW YORK (AP) — J.A. Happ made the midseason impact the Yankees hoped for, pitching one-run ball over six innings to win his New York debut.

Three days after New York acquired the 35-year-old left-hander from Toronto for infielder Brandon Drury and outfield prospect Billy McKinney, Happ took a shutout into the fifth before Salvador Perez's opposite-field home run into the Yankees bullpen in right-center. Happ (11-6) struck out two and walked one, and the first-time All-Star ended a four-start winless streak.

Aaron Hicks hit a two-run homer in the first off the screen attached to the right-field foul pole, a drive



Boston Red Sox's Nathan Eovaldi smiles as he steps off the mound after pitching against the Minnesota Twins in the fourth inning of a baseball game, Sunday, July 29, 2018, in Boston.

Associated Press

off Burch Smith (1-2). Hicks also doubled, singled and walked for the Yankees, who took three over four against the woeful Royals (32-73), who traded star third baseman Mike Moustakas to Milwaukee on Friday.

RANGERS 4, ASTROS 3
HOUSTON (AP) — Jurickson Profar hit a go-ahead double deflected by the pitcher and stayed in despite getting kicked in the face as Texas became the first team to sweep Houston this year.

Texas took three in a row from the AL West leaders and extended the Astros' skid to a season-high four games.

The last-place Rangers won even though they struck out 19 times — the most Houston pitchers have recorded in a nine-inning game in franchise history.

It was 1-all in the sixth when Rougned Odor doubled and Profar hit a grounder nicked by Lance McCullers (10-6) that rolled into

the outfield. Astros second baseman Yuli Gurriel lost his balance and kicked Profar in the cheek with his cleats as he slid into second base. Mike Minor (7-6) allowed four hits and two runs while striking out eight in six innings for his first win since June 27. Keone Kela allowed a run in the ninth before retiring George Springer with two on to get his 24th save.

INDIANS 8, TIGERS 1
DETROIT (AP) — Yonder Alonso, Melky Cabrera and Edwin Encarnacion all homered for Cleveland, and Corey Kluber pitched into the eighth inning in a victory over Detroit.

Rajai Davis added a triple and two doubles for the Indians, who took two of three in Detroit and extended their AL Central lead to nine games over Minnesota. It's the largest division lead in the major leagues at the moment.

Kluber (13-6) allowed a run and five hits in 7 1/3 innings. He walked one and struck

out five.

Jordan Zimmermann (4-3) allowed five runs and six hits in three innings.

ORIOLES 11, RAYS 5
BALTIMORE (AP) — Adam Jones had three hits and an RBI in what could be his final game with the Orioles, and Baltimore beat Tampa Bay for a rare series win.

The rebuilding Orioles are looking to deal Jones before Tuesday's non-waiver trade deadline. Now in his 11th year with Baltimore, the 31-year-old center fielder becomes a free agent after the season.

Jones is on a tear, batting .417 during a nine-game hitting streak. He went 3 for 4 with a walk and notched his 85th stolen base with the Orioles, moving him into a tie for 10th place with Don Buford on the franchise list. Chris Davis hit a pair of two-run homers, and Austin Wynn and Jonathan Schoop also connected for the Orioles.

BLUE JAYS 7, WHITE SOX 4
CHICAGO (AP) — Bran-

don Drury hit a go-ahead, two-run double in a five-run ninth inning and Toronto beat Chicago.

Luke Maile had an RBI double and Lourdes Gurriel Jr. added an RBI single in the inning before Gurriel exited with knee and ankle injuries. Teoscar Hernandez homered to tie the game earlier in the ninth for the Blue Jays, who won two of three against the White Sox.

Hernandez's homer to lead off the inning was his 16th of the season.

Gurriel extended his Toronto record of consecutive multihit games to 11 with his RBI single in the eighth that cut the lead to 3-2. The 24-year-old has batted .500 (25 for 50) during the streak, which ties Tony Perez in 1973 for the longest in the last 50 years in the majors.

Luis Santos (1-1) allowed a run in two innings for the win. Jace Fry (0-2) allowed three runs without recording an out.

MARINERS 8, ANGELS 5
ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Mike Zunino had a two-run double in a seven-run first inning and Marco Gonzales (12-5) went six strong innings to help Seattle beat Los Angeles.

Zunino drove in three runs, also delivering an RBI double in the third inning, as the Mariners salvaged the final game of the three-game series. Dee Gordon, Denard Span and Ben Gamel had three hits each for the Mariners.

Justin Upton hit a two-run home run for the Angels in the fifth inning, his 21st of the season, and added an RBI single in the seventh. Los Angeles saw its four-game win streak come to an end. Angels starter Felix Pena (1-2) faced nine batters and recorded just one out. □

Osuna sent to Astros by Blue Jays for Giles in closer swap

SEATTLE (AP) — Swapping a closer with on-field problems for one with off-field troubles, the World Series champion Houston Astros have traded Ken Giles to the Toronto Blue Jays along with a pair of pitching pros-

pects for Roberto Osuna. Houston also sent right-handers David Paulino and Hector Perez to Toronto as part of the deal Monday, a day before the deadline for trades without waivers. The 23-year-old Osuna is

eligible to pitch in the major leagues starting Sunday after a 75-game suspension under Major League Baseball's domestic violence policy. He has made six scoreless one-inning appearances in the minors

since July 14, the last three at Triple-A.

Osuna has not pitched in the big leagues since May 6, two days before he was put on administrative leave when he was charged with one count of assault in To-

ronto — which remains pending. Osuna is 0-0 with nine saves in 10 chances and a 2.93 ERA in 15 games this season. He was an All-Star last year, when he went 3-4 with 39 saves and a 3.38 ERA. □

Newcomb falls 1 out short of no-hitter, Braves beat Dodgers

By The Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Sean Newcomb came within one strike of pitching the first no-hitter by the Atlanta Braves since 1994, denied when Chris Taylor sharply singled in a 4-1 win over the Los Angeles Dodgers on Sunday. Newcomb had a 2-2 count with two outs in the ninth inning when Taylor hit a hard grounder beyond the reach of diving third baseman Johan Camargo. That came on the career-high 134th and final pitch by the 25-year-old lefty.

Newcomb (10-5) left to a thunderous standing ovation from the sellout crowd at SunTrust Park as manager Brian Snitker removed him. Snitker took the ball and gave it back to Newcomb as a keepsake — instead, Newcomb simply tossed it toward the Atlanta dugout as he walked off, wanting no souvenir of the near-miss.

Newcomb apologized about an hour after the game for racist, homophobic and sexist tweets he sent as a teenager, calling them "some stupid stuff."

Ross Stripling (8-3) was subpar in his second straight start, allowing four runs, seven hits and one walk with five strikeouts in four innings.

CUBS 5, CARDINALS 2

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Kyle Hendricks pitched seven sharp innings, Ben Zobrist had four hits and the Cubs salvaged the finale of their weekend series.

Hendricks (7-9) retired his last 17 batters, settling into a nice little groove after

Marcell Ozuna's two-run homer in the first inning. The right-hander allowed four hits in just his second win in his last eight starts.

Zobrist and Anthony Rizzo homered as NL leading-Chicago moved 1 1/2 games ahead of second-place Milwaukee in the NL Central. Pedro Strop pitched a perfect ninth for his fifth save.

St. Louis had won three of four. John Gant (3-4) was charged with three runs, two earned, and four hits in 4 1/3 innings.

The start of the game was delayed 1 hour, 16 minutes due to rain.

ROCKIES 3, ATHLETICS 2

DENVER (AP) — German Marquez continued Colorado's strong starting pitching, Tom Murphy homered and the Rockies beat Oakland to sweep the inter-league series.

Marquez (9-8) returned from paternity leave to deliver 7 2/3 solid innings and help the Rockies win for the 11th time in 13 games. He allowed two runs on five hits and struck out eight. He left to a standing ovation after fanning Nick Martini.

Khris Davis and Matt Chapman homered for the A's, who lost just their first series in their last 12. Oakland had won six straight games before being swept in Colorado.

METS 1, PIRATES 0

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Zack Wheeler pitched six strong innings and drove in the lone run, leading New York over Pittsburgh.

Wheeler (5-6) allowed five hits with seven strikeouts

and one walk, and got his fourth RBI of the season on a double in the fifth. He won a third straight start after giving up a combined six runs in 14 2/3 innings over his past two.

The Mets split the four-game series with the Pirates, who lost for just the fourth time in their past 19 games.

Wheeler's double helped his own cause after Luis Guillorme singled with two outs. He sent a drive off Joe Musgrove (4-5) over right fielder Gregory Polanco to score Guillorme from second.

GIANTS 8, BREWERS 5

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Buster Posey had four hits, including a three-run double to help San Francisco break out of a collective funk, and the Giants beat Milwaukee to avoid a four-game sweep.

Pablo Sandoval added a two-run triple before leaving with a possible hamstring injury, Gorkys Hernandez hit his 12th home run and Evan Longoria had a sacrifice fly, his first RBI since spending more than a month on the disabled list.

Andrew Suarez (4-6) allowed four runs in six innings for his first win since June 29. Ryan Braun, Travis Shaw and Hernan Perez homered for Milwaukee. Christian Yelich singled to extend his hitting streak to 13 games.

San Francisco had been held to two or fewer runs in 11 of its 22 games in July before breaking out against Milwaukee starter Junior Guerra (6-7) in the third.

REDS 4, PHILLIES 0



Atlanta Braves starting pitcher Sean Newcomb works in the fourth inning of a baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers, Sunday, July 29, 2018, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — Luis Castillo allowed four hits in a season-high seven innings, Scooter Gennett hit a two-run homer and Cincinnati wrapped up its long homestand with a third consecutive win over Philadelphia.

Phillip Ervin and Curt Casali each had an RBI and run for the Reds, who won a four-game series against the Phillies for the first time in nearly 21 years.

Castillo (6-8) had a season-high nine strikeouts. He retired 14 of his last 15 batters. Philadelphia has lost Zach Eflin's last three starts after winning six straight. In his second start since coming off the disabled list with a right middle finger blister, Eflin (7-3) allowed four runs in 5 1/3 innings.

MARLINS 5, NATIONALS 0
MIAMI (AP) — Jose Urena and three relievers combined on a two-hitter for Miami in a win over Washington to split a four-game series.

Urena (3-10) threw six scoreless innings allowing only one hit. Adam Conley, Brad Ziegler, and Drew

Steckenrider each pitched an inning in relief for the Marlins.

Miami was outscored 19-4 losing the first two games before limiting the Nationals to one run on seven hits in the final two games.

Jeremy Hellickson (4-2) allowed five runs, three earned, and eight hits in 4 2/3 innings.

DIAMONDBACKS 5, PADRES 4

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Paul Goldschmidt and Nick Ahmed each hit a two-run homer and A.J. Pollock also connected for Arizona, which held on to beat San Diego for a three-game sweep.

Clay Buchholz (4-1) almost got through the sixth as he won his third straight start. Brad Boxberger, who was with San Diego in 2012-13, pitched a perfect ninth for his 25th save in 30 chances. The Padres lost their fifth straight game and dropped to 2-7 since the All-Star break. They've lost 12 of 14 overall.

All three Diamondbacks homers came off rookie lefty Joey Lucchesi (5-6). □

Nationals SS Turner apologizes for offensive tweets

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nationals shortstop Trea Turner apologized Sunday night for some years-old homophobic and racially insensitive tweets, becoming the latest in a series of major leaguers to address offensive language they used on social media. The tweets surfaced hours after Washington's 5-0 loss at Miami.

The posts are from 2011 and 2012. The 25-year-old Turner said there is no excuse for his language and he is "sincerely sorry for those tweets and apologize wholeheartedly." "I believe people who know me understand those regrettable actions do not reflect my values or who I am," he said in a statement issued by the team. "But I

understand the hurtful nature of such language and am sorry to have brought any negative light to the Nationals organization, myself or the game I love."

Atlanta Braves pitcher Sean Newcomb also apologized Sunday for racist, homophobic and sexist tweets he sent as a teenager, calling them "some

stupid stuff." Major League Baseball dealt with a similar situation this month involving Milwaukee Brewers reliever Josh Hader on the night he pitched in the All-Star Game.

Mike Rizzo, the president of baseball operations for the Nationals, said he spoke with Turner about the issue. "He understands that his

comments — regardless of when they were posted — are inexcusable and is taking full responsibility for his actions," Rizzo said in a separate statement released by the team. "The Nationals organization does not condone discrimination in any form, and his comments in no way reflect the values of our club." □

Hall of Fame to "honor" absent Owens as part of 2018 class

By **BARRY WILNER**
AP Pro Football Writer

Despite his decision to not attend Saturday's Pro Football Hall of Fame induction ceremonies, Terrell Owens will be "honored" by the hall for his NFL career.

Hall President David Baker tells The Associated Press on Monday that the Canton, Ohio, shrine's mission statement begins with the goal "to honor the heroes of the game."

So Owens, who instead will be making an appearance at the University of Chattanooga, where he played college football, will be part of the 2018 class exhibit that includes a glass locker for each new member; their pictures on the light standards of Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium; a role in opening videos shown within the stadium; and mention in any reference to the 2018 class.

Baker said NFL Network and ESPN, which both



In this July 18, 2018, file photo, former NFL player Terrell Owens arrives at the ESPY Awards in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

televise the inductions, will show a video of Owens' career to the audience at home. That video will not

be shown in the stadium.

"It's difficult he will not be here to put on the jacket, unveil his bust, make a speech, and attend the parade," Baker says. "For those things, there's nothing we can do."

Owens has cited the fact it took three years of eligibility for him to make the hall, claiming there were false representations of him as a teammate during the voting process. He also noted that no former players vote, ignoring that Hall of Famers James Lofton and Dan Fouts are among those on the committee.

The 44-year-old Owens had a mostly sensational 15-year career playing for San Francisco, Philadelphia, Dallas, Buffalo and Cincinnati. He is second to Jerry Rice in receiving yards and third in touchdown catches behind Rice and Randy Moss, who is entering the hall this week and will attend the festivities.

But he also eventually wore out his welcome in those cities, and now Canton probably can be added to that list.

Though he will always be received properly at the hall, Baker says.

"I told him I am very disappointed, it is unprecedented, and we've certainly been trying to persuade him to come," Baker says. "He has a whole city here, with 4,800 volunteers who do everything to honor these guys. For him, this could be the opportunity to be honored the way I believe he always felt he should be honored."

"We respect he has strong feelings of his own and I respect his right to make that decision. I invited him to the hall, even at the last moment he would be welcomed, and he is welcomed every day the rest of his life. Even though he is not here, we will honor him to the best of our ability." □

Catch your own dinner with Driftwood!

Motto at Driftwood Restaurant: Hook and Cook your Own Fish!



Oranjestad-Renaissance Marina Downtown is home to the Driftwood Fishing Charters, the successful fishermen of the established seafood restaurant Driftwood. Herby senior and Herby Junior both share a passion and love for fishing. They know what the local waters have to offer and what fresh fish really means. Over 30 years ago, the idea for the fishing charter was born.

Captain Herby would catch the fish to be served at the restaurant the same day. That concept still lives, what is 'hooked' during the day is cooked in the evening at the restaurant.

Herby shares his experience with his crew, who take out guests daily on their tournament rigged 35ft twin engine

Bertram "Driftwood" or on their more spacious 37ft twin engine Bertram called "Living Easy". Both yachts are available for charters from 8am to 12 noon, or from 1 to 5pm (6-hour trips also available). To book a fishing charter visit www.driftwoodfishingcharters.com or call Herbert direct at (297)-5924040.



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NASCAR needs to change the tone starting at the top

By JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) —

The sky is not falling on NASCAR, its top executives insist, and a cheerier disposition could go a long way in lifting the black clouds surrounding the series.

That is a paraphrase of the message NASCAR chief operating officer Steve Phelps delivered at Pocono Raceway during a weekend sponsorship celebration. Phelps was presenting good news — that Camping World will continue as sponsor of the Truck Series through 2022 under Gander Outdoors branding — but his singular announcement couldn't mask the larger issues facing NASCAR.

Phelps argued otherwise. "I think this industry tends to focus on the negative," Phelps said. "I'm not really sure why." Because television ratings continue to slide, and seven-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson is seeking a new sponsor. Because the same three drivers have combined to win 16 of 21 Cup races this season, and the tracks and the schedule are stale. Because the France family is reportedly interested in selling NASCAR and Chairman Brian France has yet to address the report straight-on and has instead stated only that his family is committed to running the series.

Phelps' position mirrored the message France delivered last week when he called SiriusXM NASCAR Radio and was asked what he would tell fans about "the



Kyle Busch celebrates after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race, Sunday, July 29, 2018, in Long Pond, Pa.

Associated Press

state of their NASCAR right now."

"Well, I think we are having a good year," France said. "Things are changing a lot in sports, and that's a given, with how things are being consumed. More digital, more this, more that, and we're trying to meet their needs in terms of how they take in NASCAR and it is terrific. We've got unbelievable fans and we are very proud of that."

Perhaps a message with a little more meat to it would have raised the spirits of an aging fanbase that no longer hangs on every left turn. Phelps is right: The vocal majority of NASCAR find fault in most everything. But that doesn't make them fools capable of believing France's proclamation that this is a "good year" for NASCAR.

For that, the blame is strictly

on NASCAR and its own failure to fix the negative perceptions surrounding the series. France could have addressed the sale rumors when Reuters first issued its report in May. But he didn't, and nearly three months later still has not stated whether NASCAR is or is not for sale. He doesn't publicly say much of anything anymore, which is his right. But someone needs to be leading the cheers and if the fans only focus on the negative it is because NASCAR isn't doing a good enough job to promote the positives.

There are some areas to crow about, too:

— Bubba Wallace was not injured Sunday in a violent collision at Pocono that cracked a section of the energy-absorbing SAFER barrier. Upgrades to safety have been an ongoing

process since Dale Earnhardt's 2001 fatal accident, and after Kyle Busch broke both his legs in a 2015 accident at Daytona, additional SAFER barriers have been built into almost every track on the circuit. Wrecks are one of the lures of NASCAR and because they are so frequent, it is easy to get desensitized to the danger. Wallace's wreck was a reminder that it is still a deadly sport, and NASCAR has worked diligently to lessen the risks.

— Three series champions are presently racing each other each week for the Cup title. Busch and Kevin Harvick have six wins each, while reigning NASCAR champion Martin Truex Jr. has four. Only four other drivers have been to victory lane this season, and the last three races have gone to Truex, Harvick and Busch,

in that order. Some may argue the Big 3 winning each week is getting old, but is a chess match between a Ford and two Toyota teams unlike anything that's been seen since the so-called "good 'ol days" of NASCAR.

— Although they aren't racing for wins right now, younger drivers are in the playoff mix and seven drivers not considered veterans are currently in the top 16 in the standings. At Pocono, five "Young Guns" finished in the top seven, and that included Hendrick Motorsports' baby-faced trio of Alex Bowman, William Byron and Chase Elliott.

— NASCAR's experiment with "enhanced weekends" that cut the on-track portion of an event from three days to two has been a boon to teams and given the road warriors a breather from the grueling 38-race schedule. Pocono was a two-day event, which led to a lengthy post-qualifying inspection process in which many cars failed. The trade-off was worth it to those who put in double shifts at the track each weekend.

"Anything that keeps us home an extra day is good for me," said Busch crew chief Adam Stevens. "I have a family, most of us do, and if we can spend some extra time with them, it takes a little stress off the year. I think it's the right way to go."

Maybe the sky isn't falling the focus too often takes a sinister slant. But that's on NASCAR to clean up — and only NASCAR knows the size of the project. □

Horan's late goal pulls U.S. into 1-1 draw with Australia

EAST HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Lindsey Horan scored in the 90th minute to give the United States a 1-1 draw with Australia on Sunday night in the Tournament of Nations.

Horan scored on a bouncing header off a well-placed corner kick from Megan Rapinoe. The tie extended the Americans' undefeated streak to 18 games.

"I actually thought performance-wise, I thought we played pretty well," Rapinoe said. "We had a lot of chances, exposed them quite a bit in the wide areas, we were able switch the ball quite a bit. We had some good chances."

It was Horan's sixth international goal.

Alex Morgan had three goals for her fourth career hat trick in the team's tournament opener Thursday against Japan in Kansas City, Kansas. Rapinoe added a goal and an assist in the 4-2 victory.

The United States, ranked



United States' Lindsey Horan (9) is hugged by teammate McCall Zerboni after scoring a goal during a women's international soccer match against Australia, Sunday, July 29, 2018, in East Hartford, Conn.

Associated Press

No. 1 in the world, is gearing up for World Cup qualifying in October. The Americans hope to defend their title next summer at the World Cup in France.

But eighth-ranked Australia, which has already secured a spot in France, struck first when Lisa De Vanna charged the ball upfield

before passing off to Chloe Logarzo for a goal in the 22nd minute.

Australia won its tournament opener 3-1 over Brazil. The Matildas, the defending Tournament of Nations champions, beat the United States 1-0 last year. That was the U.S. team's last loss. They've gone 15-0-

3 since.

The result put the U.S. and Australia atop the tournament standings with four points apiece.

"These are the kind of games we're going to see into qualifying and obviously going in to the World Cup next year," Rapinoe said. "I mean, I love these

games. I wish obviously that we would have won, but (it was) a competitive environment, great stadium tonight. It was a good match for us, good in a lot of ways, good performance and good preparing us going forward."

Attendance for the match was announced a 21,570.

Earlier Sunday at Pratt & Whitney Stadium at Rentschler Field, five-time FIFA World Player of the Year Marta scored in the 76th minute and Beatriz added a goal before the end of regulation for a 2-1 victory for seventh-ranked Brazil against Japan.

Moeno Sakaguchi scored in the third minute of stoppage time for sixth-ranked Japan, which has also secured a spot in the World Cup.

The tournament wraps up on Thursday at Toyota Park in Bridgeview, Illinois. Japan faces Australia in the opening match followed by the United States against Brazil. □

Michael Andrew caps breakout U.S. Nationals with 50 free win

By **BETH HARRIS**
AP Sports Writer

IRVINE, Calif. (AP) — Michael Andrew is swimming in deeper waters now, having qualified for his first major international senior meet with a breakout performance at the U.S. national championships.

Andrew earned his fourth victory, upsetting current world champion Caeleb Dressel and 2016 Olympic bronze medalist Nathan Adrian in the 50-meter freestyle on Sunday night.

"My lucky number is four," Andrew said, noting it signifies the fastest qualifying lane. "I felt like it would be a nice way to end nationals with four titles."

Andrew, who turned pro five years ago at age 14, outdueled Dressel in the closing meters to touch first in 21.49.

"I'm superstoked with the time and for the entire nationals," Andrew said. "It's been incredible."

Andrew punched the water with his right hand and

then raised both arms in the lane next to Dressel.

"Already being on the team there was no pressure, I could race completely free," Andrew said.

He also won the 100 breaststroke and titles in the 50 breast and 50 butterfly at the meet that determined the U.S. roster for next month's Pan Pacific championships in Tokyo.

Dressel finished in 21.67, while Adrian was third in 21.85. They were the only men under 22 seconds in the 50 free final.

Simone Manuel won the women's 50 free to go with her earlier title in the 100 free.

"There's a lot of aspects in both my races that I can improve going into Tokyo," she said.

The Olympic silver medalist in Rio got to the wall first in 24.10, bettering the U.S. Open record of 24.13 set by Cate Campbell of Australia in May 2008. Manuel's time also took down the 10-year-old meet record of

24.25 by Dara Torres and it was fourth-quickest in the world this year.

"That's cool," Manuel said of the records.

Olympian Abbey Weitzeil finished second in 24.63. Margo Geer was third. Geer was third in the 100 free and Weitzeil was fourth.

Kathleen Baker won her third individual event, racing to victory by 1.11 seconds in the 200 individual medley.

Baker led all the way and won in 2 minutes, 8.32 seconds, lowering the U.S. Open record of 2:08.66 set by Katinka Hosszu of Hungary in 2015. Her time in the four-stroke event was also the fastest in the world this year.

Baker qualified to swim three individual events at Pan Pacs after setting a world record in the 100 backstroke and tying for first in the 200 back.

Olympian Chase Kalisz won the men's 200 IM in 1:55.73, fastest in the world this year.



Michael Andrew celebrates after winning the men's 50-meter freestyle final at the U.S. national championships swimming meet Sunday, July 29, 2018, in Irvine, Calif.

Associated Press

The men's 800 free title went to Zane Grothe in 7:44.57. He broke the U.S. Open record of 7:46.78 set by Connor Jaeger in 2013. Open-water Olympian Jordan Wilimovsky was a distant second in 7:47.51.

Ashley Twichell won the 1,500 free by 6.88 seconds over Ally McHugh. Twichell touched in 15:55.68, the only woman in the final to break 16 minutes. McHugh was timed in 16:02.56. □



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Team Sky's dominance at Tour de France set to continue

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN
AP Sports Writer

PARIS (AP) — The Tour de France has a new champion, but the narrative remains the same at cycling's biggest race: Team Sky's domination has no limits.

By placing Geraint Thomas on top of the podium on the Champs-Élysées on Sunday, the British outfit ended three weeks of racing which sadly lacked suspense with a sixth win in the past seven Tours.

Once again, Team Sky riders have been untouchable on the roads of France, controlling the race with ease as Thomas became the third Briton to win the Tour after Bradley Wiggins and four-time champion Chris Froome.

Since Wiggins won in 2012 wearing a Team Sky jersey, the richest team in the peloton has claimed every edition of the race except one, in 2014 when Froome crashed out and Vincenzo Nibali of Italy emerged victorious.

Even the expulsion of Gi-

anni Moscon for punching a rival during Stage 15 had no effect on Sky's well-oiled machine, as the team managed by Dave Brailsford completed a fourth consecutive Grand Tour win.

"We were well behind our goals the year we started, we did better the next year then we won the Tour with Bradley," said Brailsford, who has supervised the team since it was created in 2010. "Chris Froome learned a lot by riding alongside Bradley, he gained a lot of experience, then Geraint learned from Chris. It is passed on from a generation to the next. We are always thinking about the future."

Although Thomas has yet to extend his contract with Sky, both he and Froome are expected to be part of the team next season. At 32, Thomas is in the best form of his life while the 33-year-old Froome will try again to equal five-time Tour winners Jacques Anquetil, Eddy Merckx, Ber-

nard Hinault and Miguel Indurain.

More talent is already emerging behind them in Egan Bernal, the 21-year-old Colombian rider who competed at his first Tour this summer. Bernal did amazing work for Thomas and Froome in the mountains, assisting both in the final Pyrenees stage. Despite his relentless efforts as a domestique, Bernal still managed a 15th-place finish overall.

In addition to Bernal, Brailsford has also recruited two of the brightest prospects in cycling, 21-year-old Pavel Sivakov and Tao Geoghegan Hart, who is 23-years-old.

"My job is to look three or four years ahead," Brailsford said. "Our riders in their 30's won't be there forever. Within the next two or three seasons, I will have the opportunity to add other youngsters in the group. This year, Egan has been looking very carefully at what Chris does, he kept asking questions, looked at every-



Britain's Geraint Thomas, left, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey and Britain's Christopher Froome hold a glass of Champagne during the 21st and last stage of the 105th edition of the Tour de France cycling race between Houilles and Paris Champs-Élysées, Sunday, July 29, 2018.

Associated Press

thing we do to win the Tour. It was the best possible experience for the future."

Sky's rivals have often complained of a lack of means in attempting to dethrone the British giant at the Tour. Sky has an estimated budget of \$40 million, about double that of Tom Dumoulin's Sunweb team.

"Of course, they have more money to spend, it makes life easier sometimes," said Dumoulin, the runner-up to Thomas. "Of course, having a big budget matters. But it would be too easy to say that Geraint Thomas had a big advantage just with this team. He was the strongest rider."

Brailsford is adamant it's not just the money, but also Sky's expertise in developing talents that help him lure the best riders.

"Bernal has a very, very

modest income," he said. "When compared to the average World Tour income, it's not much, most of the riders are making more money."

David Lappartient, president of cycling's governing body, has suggested that a salary cap limiting team spending could be introduced to ensure more suspense in the future, while Tour director Christian Prudhomme would like to see a ban on power meters monitoring cyclists' watts to make the race less predictable.

"Because of these power meters, riders know for how many kilometers and minutes they can sustain their effort," Prudhomme said. "Because of that, bluff strategies have disappeared from the race, and they should return." □

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Japan website offers anonymity for variety of grievances

By NICOLA SHANNON

Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — A cartoon cat in a purple robe brandishes a tiny gavel as it comforts another cat yowling from abuse: The images welcoming visitors to Sorehara, a Japanese website for anonymous complaints about harassment and other grievances, are deceptively endearing.

"You don't have to suffer alone. Get help from the cat who seeks justice," it says.

Sorehara, an abbreviation of the Japanese for "That's harassment," was devised by a 21-year-old college student and, like many #MeToo apps and websites, is meant to help victims of abuse safely fight back against their tormentors.

It allows users to send anonymous complaints by email, without registering any personal information and is gaining popularity in Japan, despite some concerns over the potential for its misuse.

On-the-job harassment is gaining attention as the #MeToo movement slowly takes root here. Sexual harassment claims have brought on recent resignations of high-profile officials, pop stars and professors. But the website doesn't focus just on sexual misbehavior. Sorehara goes to very Japanese extremes in allowing users to register their disapproval electroni-



This photo provided by Quaerere Co., Ltd., shows the homepage of the Sorehara website that features Sore-neko, "the cat who seeks justice."

Associated Press

cally to those who offend them in all sorts of ways, including indulging in garlic, wearing excessive perfume or smelling too strongly of cigarette smoke.

Victim blaming can be severe in highly conformist Japan so anonymity is essential for helping them feel safe, says Tatsuki Yoshida, 21, who developed Sorehara and founded his start-up Quaerere last year. "In Japan, companies don't like to deal with harassment issues. People who raise their voices about harassment usually just get moved to a different department or maybe given a raise. Or they get fired," he told The Associated Press in a recent interview in Fujisawa, southwest of Tokyo. A college sophomore, he is

taking time off from his studies to work on Sorehara.

Inappropriate behavior and unwanted sexual advances, repugnant and dangerous as they can be, are just part of a universe of gripes people might have about their co-workers.

So Sorehara offers users various options, including "power harassment," bullying, alcohol harassment, sexual harassment and even "smell harassment." Next, they chose the level of severity, ranging from mere annoyance to threatening legal action. They fill in the email and a name or nickname of the person accused of the misbehavior, but not their own email or name. The Japanese-language site gives an option to delay sending the message for up to two months, to reduce the possibility of the accuser being recognized.

Recipients get an email politely notifying them of the harassment claim, asking if they recognize it and giving a choice of responses such as: "I will reflect on my behavior," or "I have done nothing wrong."

An English version was released recently, and a Korean-language version is in the works.

The #MeToo era has inspired companies, colleges and support groups to devise all sorts of apps and other online support for victims of sexual harassment and other abuses.

Some, like Protibadi in Bangladesh, HarassMap in Egypt and bSafe use mapping and GPS technology to help protect people by identifying potentially unsafe locations or notifying a user's friends if the person seems to be in trouble. AI-powered chatbots like Spot, developed in California, automate harassment reporting. Others focus on support and counseling for victims. Few combine anonymity with direct online complaints the way Sorehara does.

Some worry that this anonymity could invite abuse because the claims can't be verified, and because many Japanese tend to view simple annoyances like body odor as grievous social transgressions.

"There's a possibility that the person you say is a harasser is not really harassing," said Yoko Iwasaki of Cuore C Cube Co., a business management consulting company in Tokyo that focuses on harassment and diversity issues.

"That person who receives that email from Sorehara might feel very weird and attacked."

Sending that kind of message can also be harassment," she said.

But Hiroaki Morio, a professor at Kansai University, says he just believes the website is meant to be "light-hearted."

"They're trying to make harassment easier to deal

with," Morio said.

Despite the wider recognition of sexual harassment as a problem, Japanese thinking has not changed much and as most people still feel unable to speak up, so anonymous outlets like Sorehara can help, says Mayumi Haruno, who became the first Japanese woman to sue alleging on-the-job sexual harassment after she was forced out of her job in the 1980s. She won 1.65 million yen (\$15,000) in damages in a lawsuit that she filed in 1989.

Social media that allow anonymity, like Line, Twitter and Mixi are popular in Japan and in neighboring South Korea, where Blind, an anonymous message board app for employees, launched a #MeToo message board early this year. "I think people are still afraid to make things public because they're afraid of a backlash," said Kyum Kim, co-founder of TeamBlind, which started the Blind app in 2013 and has offices in San Francisco, Seoul and Tokyo.

"I think that's the culture right now in Japan and Korea."

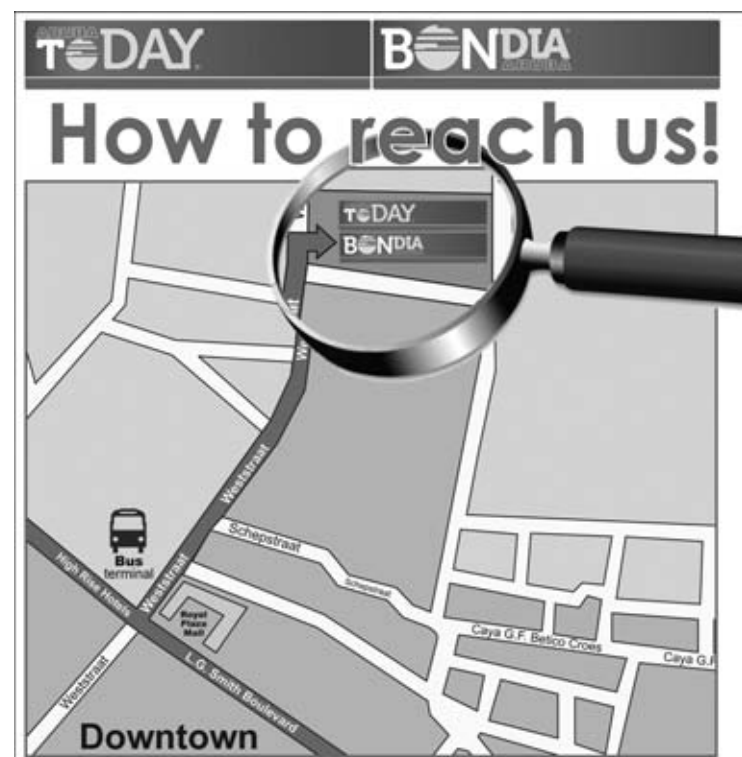
Sorehara says it sends about 50 complaints a day. Most people who get them accept or at least acknowledge them, suggesting most claims are genuine, Yoshida said.

He says Sorehara is meant more to open lines of communication and raise awareness than to provide a formal way to report or solve harassment cases. Different people draw social lines in different places, Yoshida says, so he wants Sorehara to help people educate each other.

Several companies, including one with about 200 employees, are working with Sorehara to use the service internally, and Yoshida says he is also collaborating with counseling services.

"I don't think companies are really changing internally," Yoshida said.

"But they are scared about their image, so at least they are paying more attention." □



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Tech stocks tumble again, pulling US indexes lower

By STAN CHOE
MARLEY JAY

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Technology stocks are falling again Monday as recent Wall Street favorites like Twitter, Alphabet and Facebook extend their losses from last week. It's a sharp turnaround for a group that had long been the stock market's undisputed leader.

A jump for energy stocks helped to offset the losses, but U.S. indexes were still modestly lower ahead of a busy week full of central-bank meetings, corporate earnings reports and the monthly U.S. jobs report.

KEEPING SCORE: The S&P 500 lost 17 points, or 0.6 percent, at 2,801 as of 1 p.m. Eastern time, and the Dow Jones industrial average lost 116 points, or 0.5 percent, to 25,334.

The Nasdaq composite has more technology stocks among its ranks, and it fell 116 points, or 1.5 percent, to 7,621. It's on pace for its third straight loss of at least 1 percent, which would be the first time that has happened in nearly three years.

The losses were concentrated in technology stocks. Overall slightly more stocks rose on the New York Stock Exchange than fell.

TECH LOSSES: Technology stocks in the S&P 500 slumped 2.3 percent, far



Trader Gordon Charlop works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Monday, July 30, 2018.

Associated Press

worse than any of the other sectors of the index. It follows a rough week for the industry after reports from Facebook and Twitter raised concerns about their growth, sending their stock prices plummeting. Twitter dropped 7.8 percent to \$31.44 following its 20.5 percent plunge on Friday.

Facebook fell another 4.4 percent to \$167.20 Monday and has dropped 23 percent in just three days. Google's parent company, Alphabet, sank 2.2 percent to \$1,225.07.

Amazon lost 2.3 percent to \$1,774.88. Netflix, which

also plunged after a disappointing quarterly report this month, gave up another 5.2 percent to \$336.65. Like Twitter, Netflix has roughly doubled in value over the last year but has fallen sharply in July. It's down 19.6 from its record high July 9.

Even with its recent tumble, the technology sector of the S&P 500 is up 25 percent over the last year. The S&P 500 itself is up 13 percent over that time.

HIGH ENERGY: Energy companies climbed as the price of benchmark U.S. oil spurted higher by 1.9 percent

to \$70.01 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, rose 1 percent to \$75.55 a barrel in London.

TARIFF TALK: Caterpillar surpassed Wall Street expectations in the second quarter and raised its forecasts for the year as the construction market remained strong. The company said new tariffs will cost it \$100 million to \$200 million this year but will make up for it by raising prices. Caterpillar rose 0.9 percent to \$143.78. Meat producer Tyson cut its profit forecast because of rising tariffs and uncertainty about trade policies. The

company said tariffs by the U.S. and other countries are affecting both imports and exports. The stock has been plunging since late January and lost another 6.9 percent to \$59.17 Monday.

RATE WATCH: The Federal Reserve will begin a two-day meeting Tuesday on interest-rate policy. The Fed has said that it may raise rates two more times in 2018, but few economists expect a move at this upcoming meeting.

More action may come from the Bank of England, which is expected to raise its key interest rate by a quarter of a percentage point on Thursday as inflation remains high. The Bank of Japan will also be meeting this week.

YIELDS: The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 2.97 percent from 2.96 percent late Friday. It's been climbing for the last couple of weeks and is close to breaching 3 percent for the first time since May.

JOB GAINS: The U.S. jobs report is usually the most anticipated piece of economic data each month, and it arrives on Friday. Both the job market and economy have been strong recently, and economists expect Friday's report to show that employers added 193,000 jobs in July. That would be a slight slowdown from June's growth of 213,000. □

US pending home sales rose 0.9 percent in June

By JOSH BOAK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More Americans signed contracts to purchase homes in June compared to May, but the volume of pending sales has slipped over the past year.

The National Association of

Realtors said Monday that its pending home sales index rose 0.9 percent last month to 106.9. But on a yearly basis, pending home sales have fallen 2.5 percent.

There are signs that home-buying has stalled in recent months due to the mix of

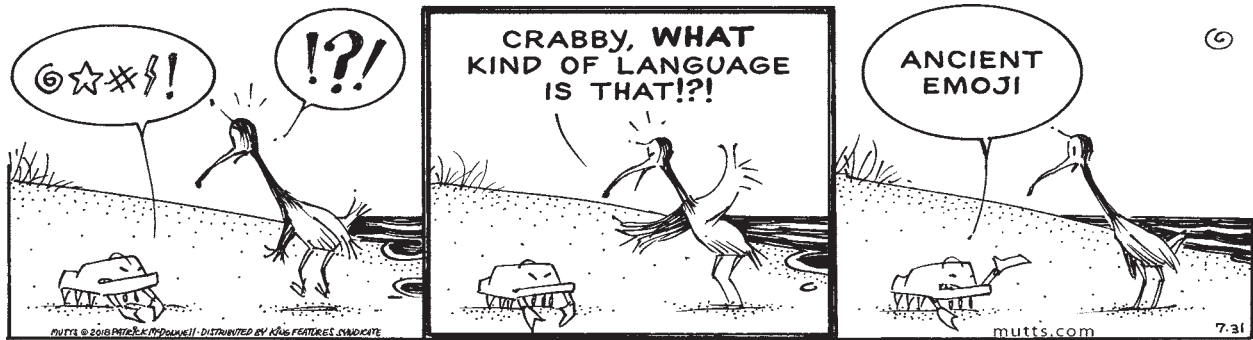
rising prices, higher mortgage rates and a dearth of sales listings.

On a monthly basis, pending sales increased in all four geographic regions: Northeast, Midwest, South and West. □

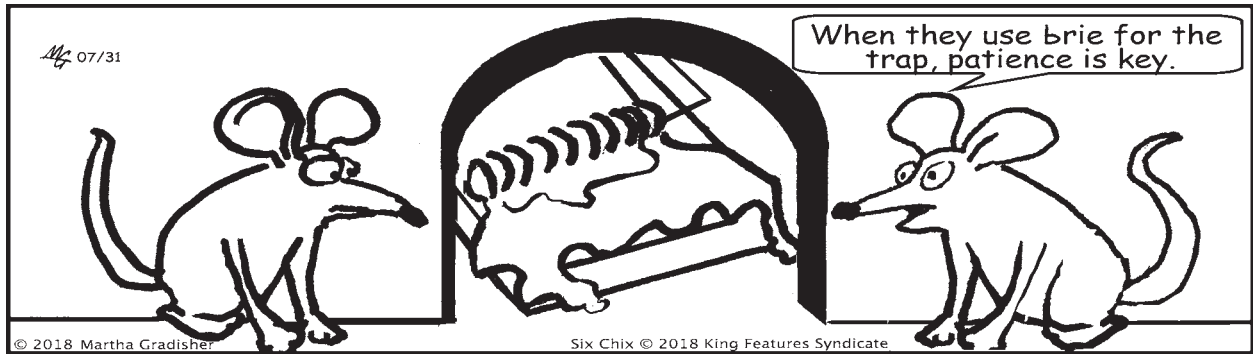


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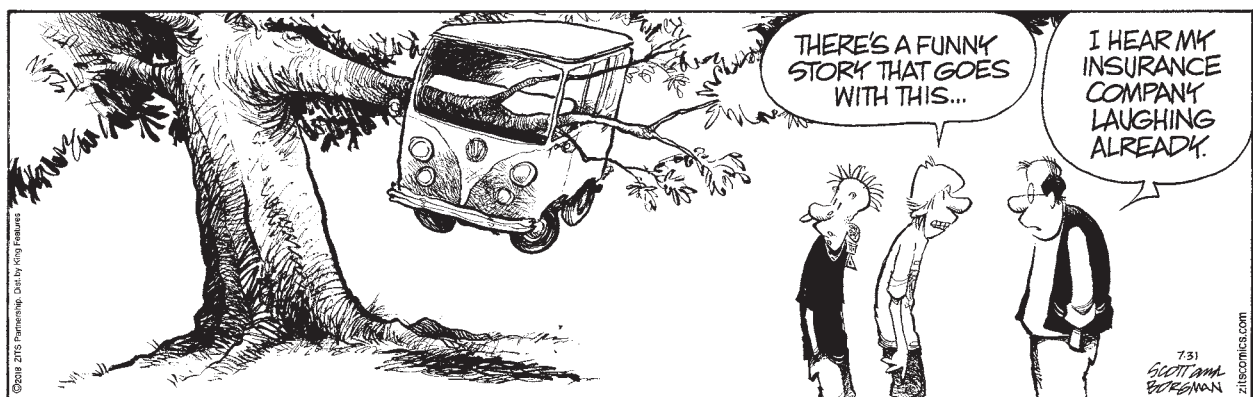
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

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| | 9 | | | | | | | |
| | 8 | 5 | 4 | | 7 | 6 | | |
| | | | | 9 | | 4 | 7 | 1 |

Difficulty Level ★★ 7/31

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 8 |
| 5 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| 3 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 7 |
| 6 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 3 |
| 7 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| 2 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 5 |
| 9 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 1 |
| 4 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 9 |
| 8 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 4 |

ACROSS

- 1 Make an effort
4 Forest fire residue
9 Fillet of __; fish dish
13 Fictional captain
15 Sandbank
16 "An apple __ keeps the doctor away"
17 Cartoon bear
18 Sicker than before
19 Diet successfully
20 Hold spellbound
22 __ and crafts
23 Angry
24 Prof.'s degree, often

- 26 Soap opera
29 Nice
34 Contaminate
35 __ as an ape
36 Suture
37 Called
38 Clever remarks
39 Bring on board
40 Commercials
41 Gas and coal
42 Shampoo brand
43 Unequaled
45 14-line poem
46 Soil Turner
47 Group of hoodlums
48 Hideous
51 Required
56 Motorist's woe
57 Hay bundles
58 Gather a harvest
60 "Yikes! That hurt!"
61 Uneven
62 Shout
63 __ like; appear to be
64 Concluded
65 Door opener

DOWN

- 1 "Love __ neighbor"
2 Housenot
3 Meditative exercise
4 Like Jacuzzi waters

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
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| 17 | | | | | 18 | | | | | 19 | | | |
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| | | | 23 | | | | | 24 | 25 | | | | |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | | | | 29 | 30 | | | 31 | 32 | 33 | |
| 34 | | | | | 35 | | | | | 36 | | | |
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| 56 | | | | | | 57 | | | | 58 | | 59 | |
| 60 | | | | | | 61 | | | | 62 | | | |
| 63 | | | | | | 64 | | | | 65 | | | |

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 7/31/18

Monday's Puzzle Solved

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | U | P | | I | N | C | A | S | | S | C | A | R |
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| O | N | A | | S | T | A | R | S | | T | E | N | S |
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| A | L | L | E | | A | S | I | A | N | | L | O | G |
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- 41 Woman's nickname
42 Male children
44 Musical beat
45 Talked back
47 Honking birds
48 Martian vehicles, for short
49 Adhesive
50 Frilly trimming
52 Make money
53 Lump of dirt
54 Emit a strong smell
55 Ivy League school
59 Layer of wood thickness

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5th Floor/Pool&Ocean View
Wk 29, Unit 2524 \$6,500
5th Floor/Harbor View
Wk 32, Unit 2509 \$5,750
5th Floor/Pool&Ocean View
Wk 32, Unit 2332 \$3,500
3rd Floor/Harbor View
Wk 33, Unit 2332 \$3,500
3rd Floor/Harbor View
Wk 34, Unit 2121 \$5,000
1st Floor/Pool View
Wk 34, Unit 2123 \$5,000
1st Floor/Pool View
Wk 34, Unit 2515 \$3,750
5th Floor/Pool View
Wk 35, Unit 2120 \$4,000
Ground Floor/Harbour View
Wk 35, Unit 2315 \$3,500
3rd Floor/Pool View
Wk 35, Unit 2349 \$6,500
3rd Floor/Ocean Front
Wk 38, Unit 2503 \$2,750
5th Floor/Ocean Front

La Cabana
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Pool View
Wk 28, Unit 112 b/c \$5,000
Pool View
Wk 30 Unit 227A \$4000
Wk 33, Unit 213C \$4,000
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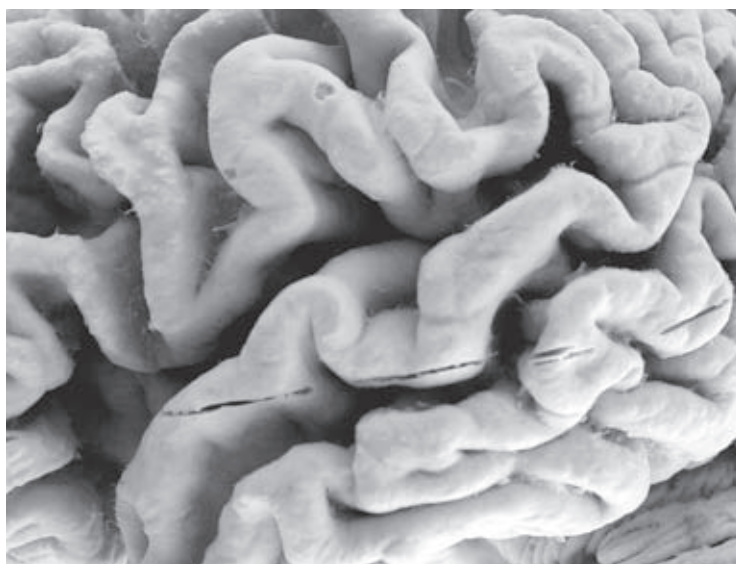
Hopes rise again for a drug to slow Alzheimer's disease

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE
AP Chief Medical Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Hopes are rising again for a drug to alter the course of Alzheimer's disease after decades of failures. An experimental therapy slowed mental decline by 30 percent in patients who got the highest dose in a mid-stage study, and it removed much of the sticky plaque gumming up their brains, the drug's makers said Wednesday. The results have been highly anticipated and have sent the stock of the two companies involved soaring in recent weeks.

The drug from Eisai and Biogen did not meet its main goal in a study of 856 participants, so overall, it was considered a flop. But company officials said that 161 people who got the highest dose every two weeks for 18 months did significantly better than 245 people who were given a dummy treatment.

There are lots of caveats about the work, which was led by company scientists rather than academic researchers and not reviewed by outside experts. The study also was too small to be definitive and the results need to be confirmed



This Oct. 7, 2003 file photo shows a section of a human brain with Alzheimer's disease on display at the Museum of Neuroanatomy at the University at Buffalo, in Buffalo, N.Y.

Associated Press

with more work, dementia experts said. But they welcomed any glimmer of success after multiple failures. "We're cautiously optimistic," said Maria Carrillo, chief science officer of the Alzheimer's Association, whose international conference in Chicago featured the results.

"A 30 percent slowing of decline is something I would want my family member to have," and the drug's ability to clear the brain plaques "looks pretty amazing," she said.

About 50 million people

worldwide have dementia, and Alzheimer's is the most common type. There is no cure—current medicines just ease symptoms. Some previous efforts to develop a drug to slow the disease may have been tried too late, after much damage had already occurred. The new drug aimed sooner, in people with early Alzheimer's, and the drug works at an earlier step in formation of the sticky brain plaques. Study participants were given one of five doses of BAN2401 or a dummy treatment via IV. After one year,

the companies said the drug didn't meet statistical goals. But after 18 months, they saw a benefit in the highest dose group.

What makes it tricky, though, is that they used a new way to measure mental decline, a scale that combines parts of three other widely used tests. This is the first study to use that measure, and it's unclear how much of a difference a 30 percent slowing of decline makes — whether it allows someone to continue to bathe or feed himself, for instance.

"It's intriguing, but these are designs we're not used to seeing," and it will require more study for doctors to feel comfortable with this as a measure of success, said one independent expert, Dr. Julie Schneider of Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

On one traditional measure of thinking skills, those at the highest dose declined 47 percent less than people given a dummy treatment. Brain scans added evidence that the drug might be effective. All participants had signs of the sticky plaques that are the hallmark of Alzheimer's at the start of the study, but 81

percent of people on the highest dose saw all signs of them disappear after 18 months, an Eisai official said.

Side effects leading to discontinuation of treatment occurred in 19 percent of those on the high dose and 6 percent of the dummy treatment group. Cases of brain swelling, which have been seen in other treatments targeting the plaques in the brain, occurred in two people in the placebo group and 16 of those in the high dose group.

Other dementia experts were encouraged.

"That's a very hopeful outcome. It means we may be on the right track," said another scientist with no role in the work, Dr. Stephen Salloway, neurology chief at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

Dr. Reisa Sperling, a neurologist at Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, said it's important to realize that this is not a cure, just possibly a slowing of decline.

"We're not suddenly returning people back to their pre-Alzheimer's baseline," she said. □



In this photo taken Wednesday July 25, 2018, the waters of Zegrze Reservoir made green by cyanobacteria bloom that has led authorities to ban bathers from getting into the water, in Zegrze, near Warsaw, Poland.

Associated Press

Algae blooms force Poland to shut down 50 Baltic Sea beaches

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Thinking of a dip in the Baltic Sea to cool off from the unusually scorching European summer? It's too hot for that.

Authorities in Poland this week banned swimming at over 50 beaches along its Baltic coast, after hot weather led to the toxic growth of bacteria in the

unusually warm sea. Baltic Sea water temperatures exceeded 23 degrees Celsius (73.4F) in some places Thursday.

Emergency water rescuers told vacationers on hot sandy beaches — from Swinoujscie in the west to Gdynia in the east — not to enter the sea, where thick green-brown cyanobac-

teria colonies have grown and pose a health threat. Regional sanitation authorities have issued warnings that contact with the bacteria may cause allergies and rashes. Drinking contaminated water can also lead to serious digestive problems.

The Baltic Sea has not seen such intense growth of cyanobacteria for 12 years. It results from exceptionally high air temperatures of 34 degrees Celsius (93.2 degrees Fahrenheit) that have raised the temperatures of the usually cold Baltic. A similar ban has been issued for some inland lakes and reservoirs, such as the Zegrze Reservoir near Warsaw. □

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Serious about laughter, National Comedy Center ready to open

By CAROLYN THOMPSON
Associated Press

JAMESTOWN, N.Y. (AP) — Comedian Billy Crystal asks the question in a video that welcomes visitors to the National Comedy Center.

"Everybody else has a place," he says. "Why not us?"

It may be as good a reason as any for the construction of the high-tech new center devoted to what has made people laugh from Vaudeville to now.

But there's more to it.

The nonprofit center in Jamestown was inspired by hometown hero, Lucille Ball, who envisioned a place where comedy would be celebrated as an art form. The city of about 30,000 people in the southwest corner of New York already is home to the annual Lucille Ball Comedy Festival and the Lucille Ball Desi Arnaz Museum.

"But it was always (Ball's) preference that Jamestown become a destination for the celebration of all comedy in a way that would foster and inspire the next generation of artists," says National Comedy Center Executive Director Journey Gunderson. "What we've done here is finally



In this July 24, 2018 photo, Bonnie Tangalos of Charlotte, N.C., reviews a comedy profile created for her during visit to the National Comedy Center in Jamestown, N.Y.

Associated Press

bring her vision to fruition." Located in a repurposed 1930 art-deco train station, the center is part museum, part hall of fame and part video arcade, keeping visitors smiling as they move through displays of comedic artifacts. There's the "puffy shirt" from a 1993 "Seinfeld" episode and scripts from the 1960s "Dick Van Dyke Show" along with lively immersive exhibits that invite visitors to explore

sound effects and props and make cartoons and memes.

The bravest can take the stage in "Comedy Karaoke," trying out lines from Jeff Foxworthy or others, or sit at a game show-like set and try to crack up an opponent. But there also are plenty of chances to laugh at the pros in action. A club-like comedy lounge shows stand-up bits, and a movie theater has clips of

classic scenes with celebrity commentary. A hologram theater initially will feature Jim Gaffigan's evolution as a performer.

The grand opening celebration starts Aug. 1.

"I'm stunned by the technology," says Andrew Tangalos of Charlotte, North Carolina, who with his wife, Bonnie, was part of a group invited to test the exhibits on Tuesday before the official opening. They started

by selecting preferred comedians, shows and movies at a lobby kiosk. After tapping computer-chip enhanced bracelets at exhibits, the couple's last stop was a station that revealed their comedy profile. It told Bonnie she leaned toward satire and observational humor.

The 37,000-square-foot (3,437-square-meter), \$50 million center received \$9 million in funding from New York state, along with private and federal support. The House of Representatives on July 23 unanimously approved a bill designating it as the nation's official comedy center. U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, whose cousin, comedian Amy Schumer is in the opening week lineup, is working on Senate action.

"Comedy is important to celebrate as an art form because it's not been celebrated at all, ever," comedian Lewis Black says on the center's welcoming video. He is part of the center's largely celebrity advisory board, along with Gaffigan, Carl Reiner, Laraine Newman, W. Kamau Bell, Paula Poundstone and others. □

'Simpsons' creators bring feminism, young talent to new show

By PABLO ARAUZ PENA
Associated Press

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Matt Groening said his new adult cartoon series "Disenchantment" has a feminist component that sets it apart from his previous shows.

Groening spoke to reporters about bringing fresh talent to the Netflix show at a Sunday panel for the Television Critics Association, joined by the voice actors Abbi Jacobson and Eric Andre.

He also highlighted the differences between the new project and his previous work, the long-running Fox series "The Simpsons."

"One of the reasons that 'The Simpsons' is what it is, is because of the time constraints," he said. "In this show, we're able to let it breathe a little more which



Matt Groening, Abbi Jacobson, Eric Andre and Josh Weinstein, cast members of the Netflix series "Disenchantment," pose for photo during the Netflix portrait session at Television Critics Association Summer Press Tour in Beverly Hills, Calif.

I find gratifying."

The series notably stands out as an adult cartoon

with a female lead. It follows the misadventures of an alcoholic slacker prin-

cess named Princess Bean, voiced by "Broad City" star Abbi Jacobson, who has

everything but a sense of purpose.

Joined by a personal demon named Luci, played by Andre, and a scruffy elf named Elfo (voiced by Nat Faxon), Bean creates mischief in the kingdom of Dreamland where she's infamous for her careless antics.

"Bean is such an anti-stereotypical princess from what we are used to seeing," said Jacobson.

Both Jacobson and Andre have built a following with the hard-to-win young adult audience in their shows "Broad City" and "The Eric Andre Show."

The stars shared their stories of growing up watching "The Simpsons" and finding their place with Groening and Josh Weinstein, creators and producers of "Disenchantment." □

Octavia Spencer brings hair mogul's story to Netflix

By LYNN ELBER
PABLO ARAUZ PENA
Associated Press

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — A roundup of news from the Television Critics Association summer meeting, at which TV networks and streaming services are presenting details on upcoming programs.

SUCCESS STORY

Octavia Spencer is bringing the remarkable saga of black haircare mogul Madam C.J. Walker to television.

Netflix said that Spencer will produce and star in a limited series about the outsized life of Sarah Breedlove, who was known professionally as Walker.

The eight-episode drama is based on the book "On Her Own Ground" by A'Lelia Bundles and includes basketball star LeBron James as a producer.

Walker became one of America's first self-made female millionaires by creating and marketing hair products for African-Americans at the turn of the 20th century.

Netflix said the series will



In this Jan. 11, 2018, file photo, Octavia Spencer arrives at the 23rd annual Critics' Choice Awards at the Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, Calif.

Associated Press

detail the hostility, rivalries and tumultuous personal life that marked Walker's life.

Spencer is an Oscar-winning actress whose credits include "The Shape of Water," "Hidden Figures" and "The Help."

A release date for "Madam C.J. Walker" was not an-

nounced.

A PRINCESS, GROENING STYLE

Matt Groening said his new adult cartoon series "Disenchantment" has a feminist component that sets it apart from his previous shows.

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"Disenchantment" premieres Aug. 17 on Netflix.

MORE 'MASTER'?

Netflix is standing by "Master of None" and Aziz Ansari despite a sexual-misconduct allegation against him earlier this year.

Cindy Holland, a programming executive for the streaming service, said there's been thought given to a third season for the comedy starring and co-created by Ansari.

She added that Netflix would "certainly be happy" to make another "Master of None" season with Ansari, but didn't commit to it or indicate what the production or release timeline might be. The show about a young, single actor in New York last aired in 2017. □

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JULY 26 - AUGUST 1

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|---|--|
| NEW THIS WEEK! | TOM CRUISE HENRY CAVILL MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE FALLOUT [PG-13] CXC PREMIUM LARGE FORMAT AUDITORIUM 2D MON-FRI 6:00 9:05 SAT-SUN 2:55 6:00 9:05 2D MON-THURS 4:45 7:50 FRIDAY 4:45 7:50 10:55 SATURDAY 1:40 4:45 7:50 10:55 SUN & HOL 1:40 4:45 7:50 |
| | NICOLAS CAGE KRISTEN BELL THE INCREDIBLES [PG] MON-THURS 4:40 6:45 8:50 FRIDAY 4:40 6:45 8:50 10:55 SATURDAY 2:35 4:40 6:45 8:50 10:55 SUN & HOL 2:35 4:40 6:45 8:50 |
| | DAVEED DIGGS RAFAEL CASAL BLINDSPOTTING [R] MON-THURS & SUN 7:20 9:30 FRI-SAT 7:20 9:30 11:40 |
| | AMANDA SEYFRIED MERYL STREEP MAMMA MIA! HERE WE GO AGAIN [PG-13] MON-THURS 4:10 6:40 9:10 FRIDAY 4:10 6:40 9:10 11:40 SATURDAY 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10 11:40 SUN & HOL 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10 |
| DENZEL WASHINGTON PEDRO PASCAL THE EQUALIZER [R] MON-THURS & SUN 3:55 6:35 9:15 FRI-SAT 3:55 6:35 9:15 10:50 | DWAYNE JOHNSON NEVE CAMPBELL SKYSCRAPER [PG-13] MON-THURS 4:50 7:05 9:20 FRIDAY 4:50 7:05 9:20 11:35 SAT 2:35 4:50 7:05 9:20 11:35 SUN & HOL 2:35 4:50 7:05 9:20 |
| ADAM SANDLER SELENA GOMEZ HOTEL TRANSILVANIA [PG] MON-FRI 4:20 6:30 8:40 SAT & SUN 2:10 4:20 6:30 8:40 | PAUL RUDD EVANGELINE LILLY ANTMAN AND THE WASP [PG-13] MON-FRI 4:45 SAT & SUN 2:10 4:45 |

STARTING AUGUST 2: DISNEY CHRISTOPHER ROBIN, THE DARKEST MINDS, SEARCHING, THE SPY WHO DUMPED ME
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THE MAGIC OF THE MOVIES ON YOUR MOBILE DEVICE

Lonely Planet has launched its first guidebooks to cruising

By The Associated Press

The travel publisher Lonely Planet has launched its first guidebooks to cruising.

The three new books out this summer are "Cruise Ports Alaska," "Cruise Ports Caribbean" and "Cruise Ports Scandinavia & Northern Europe."

The books include color maps, reviews, recommendations for activities and outings in ports of call including shopping and dining, as well as tips on how to save time and money.

The guide to Scandinavia and Northern Europe offers sections on Berlin, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsinki, Reykjavik and St. Petersburg; Tallinn, Estonia, and Riga, Latvia; Gdansk, Poland; the Shetland and Orkney

islands; and Oslo and Bergen in Norway.

The Caribbean guide to "perfect days on shore" covers Miami, Cozumel, Mexico, the Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Bahamas, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Martin, Turks & Caicos, Aruba, Antigua, Bonaire, Curacao and Barbados.

The Alaska guide includes sections on Seattle and Vancouver, where most Alaska cruises originate, along with a look at Alaskan ports, parks and destinations like Ketchikan, Sitka, Juneau, Haines, Skagway, Whittier, Seward, Anchorage, Glacier Bay and Denali national parks.

The guides also have sections on trip-planning, including month by month guides and advice on choosing the right cruise



This undated photo shows the cover of Lonely Planet's new guide to cruising in Scandinavia and Northern Europe.

Associated Press

for you, along with tips on everything from visas to ground transportation to tours.

The books retail for \$20. □

Insider Q&A: Kidbox designs its own fashions

By JOSEPH PISANI

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Kidbox, the online styling service for children, is growing up.

The 2-year-old company, which ships a box of seven items to customers and charges only for what they keep, will soon start including fashions it designs itself based on customer feedback. CEO Miki Racine Berardelli says Kidbox will still offer clothing from the 110 brands it works with, while the new lines will help it add more harder-to-find looks.

Kidbox's expansion comes as more online retailers seek to dress youngsters. Stitch Fix, another online styling service with 2.7 million users, is preparing to launch a children's version in time for the back-to-school season. And Amazon's try-before-you-buy Wardrobe service includes kids clothing and accessories. (New York-based Kidbox does not disclose how many customers it has.)

Racine Berardelli talked recently to The Associated Press about the competition and other ways Kidbox may expand. The questions and answers have been edited for clarity and length.



In this Monday, June 25, 2018 photo, Kidbox CEO Miki Racine Berardelli, shows products for her online styling service for kids, in New York.

Associated Press

Q: Stitch Fix is launching a kids' version. Are you concerned?

A: I'm excited about it, because it validates our business model and it really helps us tell our story. We are in the business of children; this is our specialty and we will be the best at it.

Q: Who is Kidbox's customer, the kid or the parent?

A: Both. They open the box together. It's very much

an activity that they both look forward to and wait for each other to do. Mini fashion shows take place in living rooms all over the United States.

Q: Do you reach out to kids for their opinions?

A: We have a kids board of directors that we meet with every year. We actually established a board comprised of children before we established a board comprised of adults.

Q: Have you made any changes based on their advice?

A: Yes, we added Adidas, and we recently added Levi's to our mix. It's amazing how brand savvy these children are.

Q: If they're asking for Adidas and Levi's, will they be happy with Kidbox's private-label clothing?

A: Absolutely. Kidbox is a vehicle of discovery. What we heard back from

customers was that Kidbox brings brands into the household that they were never aware of.

Q: What kind of customer feedback or data are you using to design the clothing?

A: In general, a lot of the girl products in the marketplace are designed very short. We had a lot of parents saying, "I want a more conservative dress silhouette for my daughter." So some of our dresses were developed with that in mind.

Q: What else could you send in the box besides clothing?

A: We think about toys, we think about books. We're currently in talks about launching into some of those categories.

Q: Would the toys or books be shipped with the clothing?

A: Potentially. That's the beauty of running a startup, the possibilities are endless.

Q: Would you consider a physical store?

A: Yes, I have a concept in my mind: A mobile store.

Q: Like a truck?

A: Yes. Right now, I'm vision without execution. But it's somebody else's job to execute my vision. □

Allegation clouds Bobby Brown's plan for violence shelter

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr.

Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Singer Bobby Brown plans to build a shelter for domestic violence victims in honor of his late daughter despite allegations that he once hit his ex-wife Whitney Houston.

Brown was set to receive a proclamation Monday from City of South Fulton Mayor Bill Edwards and other officials acknowledging his plans build the not-for-profit Bobbi Kristina Brown Serenity House. The shelter will also offer a 24-hour crisis intervention line and an emergency transitional shelter.

Bobbi Kristina Brown, 22, was found unresponsive in a bathtub in 2015 and died after six months in a coma. Her estate sued her boy-



In this June 25, 2017 file photo, Bobby Brown arrives at the BET Awards at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

friend, Nick Gordon, for wrongful death, accusing him of assault and other offenses. An attorney for Gordon called the charges baseless, but after Gordon failed to defend himself in the civil case, a judge ruled

against him in 2016 and ordered him to pay \$36 million.

Bobbi Kristina Brown's mother, Houston, died in 2012 after she drowned in a bathtub. Coroner's officials ruled Houston's death

accidental and said heart disease and cocaine were contributing factors.

Last week, Brown speaking with reporters, said he still struggles with their deaths. He denied that his tumultuous marriage with Houston ever turned violent, despite a 2016 interview with ABC's Robin Roberts in which Brown said he once hit her. Houston called police just outside Atlanta in December 2003 to report that Brown threatened to beat her and then hit her in the face, leaving her with a bruised cheek and a cut inside her lip. But Brown described the incident as a "little spat" saying the two were playfully "slap boxing" before Houston took one of his jabs a "little serious."

A judge in May 2004 ruled

there was enough evidence for Brown to stand trial on misdemeanor battery charges and set a deadline about two months later for Brown to turn himself over to authorities for fingerprinting. An Associated Press report from the time says Brown and Houston exchanged smiles during the hearing and left the courtroom arm-in-arm. Brown turned himself in on July 11, 2004, a few hours before the court-imposed deadline, and was released after posting a \$2,000 bond.

A notice from the Fulton County solicitor general's office says the case was dismissed in December 2005. The reason prosecutors gave was: "Unable to contact the victim." □

Ancient churches and origins of wine in Republic of Georgia

By KEVIN BEGOS

TBILISI, Georgia (AP) —

Want to learn about the origins of winemaking? You'll have to go about 2,000 miles (3,200 kilometers) east of Bordeaux, France, to the Republic of Georgia, in the Caucasus Mountains.

This beautiful and affordable country has many other attractions for both budget and sophisticated travelers.

There are 1,000-year-old churches, wild mountains offering winter and summer splendor, and coastal resorts on the Black Sea. After being part of the Soviet Union for decades, Georgia declared independence in 1991, and the country has embraced tourism and development.

While visiting Georgia to research a book about the origins of wine, I kept having to choose between wine experiences and other tempting options. Georgian architecture, food, wine and music is a multi-ethnic mix of East and West. Romans, Persians,



This undated photo shows a vineyard in the Republic of Georgia's Kakheti region, with the Caucasus Mountains in the distance.

Associated Press

Mongols, Arabs, and Russians all fought to control the country over the last 2,000-plus years. Now the people are overwhelmingly Christian, yet street food and Georgian chants have a Middle Eastern or even

Asian tinge.

For wine lovers, a trip to Georgia is like going back to a vineyard Garden of Eden. Archaeological sites show that Georgians began making wine at least 5,000 years before the French.

Patrick McGovern, a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania, has examined 8,000-year-old Georgian pottery that is decorated with "grape clusters and jubilant stick-figures, with arms raised high, under grape arbors," and burial mounds contain ornate gold and silver goblets with depictions of ancient drinking ceremonies. The classic Georgian chant "Shen Khar Venakhi" ("Thou Art a Vineyard") was reputedly written by King Demetrius I in the 12th century. It is still popular at weddings.

You can experience and taste some of the wine history throughout the Georgian countryside. Small wineries and many, many families still ferment grapes in oval clay containers called qvevri, which may have inspired the later amphora of Greece and Rome. Georgia has hundreds of native wine grape varieties, including kisi, mtsvane, rkatsiteli and saperavi. Try the unfiltered and natural golden (or orange) wine style for a sense

of how wine was first made thousands of years ago.

A "Game of Thrones" episode could be filmed in the eastern Kakheti region, which has numerous vineyards. The Alaverdi monastery and winery, which dates to the year 1011, features a 170-foot (50-meter) tower and high stone walls, with beautiful icons inside the church.

Father Gerasim, bearded and dressed in a traditional long black cassock, said the Alaverdi monks are carrying on a tradition passed down through generations. "I remember when I was about 3 or 4 years old, my grandfather or father took me to the wine cellar every time they went. Wine ties, and tied, the human being to his community, to his

land," Gerasim said.

Ancient rituals linger. Every September, Georgians from several ethnic and religious backgrounds make a pilgrimage to Alaverdi called Alaverdoba. The festival, which now lasts for about a week, was in ancient times a multi-week harvest celebration linked to pagan, pre-Christian moon cults.

For outdoor pursuits, the Caucasus Mountains rise to more than 15,000 feet (4,600 meters), with glacial lakes and semi-tropical valleys hidden throughout. It is untamed land, but also a botanical and human crossroads for Central Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East that is home to Anatolian leopards, bears, wolves, lynx and golden eagles.

Researchers from the Chicago Botanic Garden found that the Caucasus contains 6,400 distinct groups of plants in a region about the size of Minnesota. In layman's terms, the isolated mountain valleys may have helped nurture and protect different species, like natural time capsules.

Back in Tbilisi, the capital, you'll find a mix of quaint old world neighborhoods and trendy new riverfront areas. The Georgian State Museum has a fine range of cultural and historical exhibits. Small bakeries make chewy, crisp, khachapuri bread. Shaped like a small alien spacecraft, try it with the traditional melted cheese and egg in the center. □



This undated photo shows Alaverdi Monastery near Akhmeta, in the Republic of Georgia.

Associated Press



This undated photo shows a farmhouse bakery in the countryside east of Tbilisi, the Republic of Georgia's capital.

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